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December 29 - January 8, 1980

Issue Number Two

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**W**es, Virginia, there is a second issue of the *New York Native*. And there will be more. But we still need a little help from people out there who want to see the *New York Native* become a very large circulation New York newspaper.

As we point out in our advertisement in this issue, you can help by subscribing to *Christopher Street* magazine.

Or you can help by calling your friends around Manhattan and urging them to ask for the *New York Native* at their local newsstand.

Or you can help by advertising in the *Native*.

The response we have had to the first issue has been very favorable. We know we've got a long way to go to develop the *Native* into a thick, successful newspaper, but we feel that we've gotten off to an exciting start.

If you're at all concerned about the direction that the fight for gay human rights will have to take during the next four years, this is an especially important issue to read. We're very grateful to Ginny Apuzzo and Lucia Valeska for allowing us to publish their recent

speeches on the human rights agendas for the Eighties. And we're proud to be able to introduce Larry Rush's new column, "D.C. Desk," in this issue. Among other things, Larry will be keeping us abreast of every attempt that the New Right makes to subvert the Constitution.

In this issue, we're also covering the story behind the Chelsea Gay Hotline, which is an exciting demonstration of what can be done to monitor violence against our community. It appears that the issue of violence may become the most potent organizing tool in the next decade. When gay people begin investigating the activities of the police and the courts, all of New York—both gay and nongay—benefits from the effort. I can see the day when other minority groups will come to the Chelsea Gay Association for tips on mobilizing their own communities against violence.

And speaking of violence, I guess we should note that this is the first Christmas of the backlash. The death of John Lennon will somehow commingle with the feelings of the season, as will the deaths of the West Street Massacre. Per-

haps the prayer of the season this year should be that all the born-again Christians put down their guns and stop murdering the nature of their religion.

I think that every gay person should make a New Year's resolution not to say the following: "Well, now that Reagan's in office you'd better oil the hinges on your closet door." It's such a defeatist sentiment filled with contemptuous cowardice. And it's boring.

We once thought that Nixon would get away with it. We thought that the Vietnam War would never end. American history has yet to become as dark as our worst nightmares. There is a nagging streak of *virtue* in this country that just won't fade. The first step toward stopping the New Right in its path of neo-Nazism is to stop hyping the impossibility of succeeding. There are times when love and justice and human decency do come out of the closet.

1981 is not the year to throw away the key.

We wish you an inspired and humane holiday season.

C.O.

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# NATIVE

N E W S

Part Two

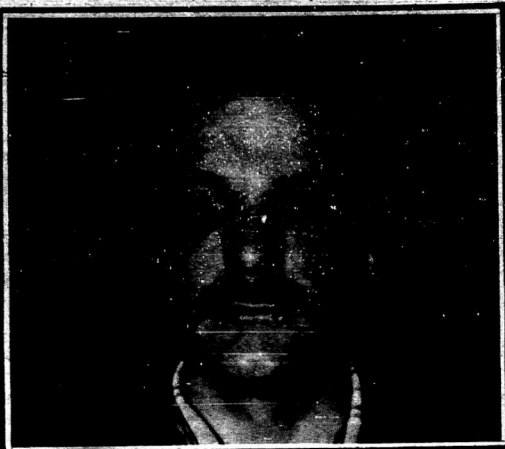
## Village Assaults

By Sean Lawrence

**I**t is becoming clear to New York's gay community that attempts to end the recent wave of street attacks on gay people must increasingly focus on New York's court system and on the office of the district attorney. The recent handling of the David Sasser case, which we reported in the first issue of the *New York Native*, has been an important learning experience for the gay community and its friends.

The case, which arose from assaults on two gay men in Greenwich Village, has revealed several puzzling practices on the part of the district attorney's office when handling incidents of violence against the gay community—and the non-gay community as well.

As we reported in the *Native*, David Sasser and Vincent Sapienza were attacked early on the morning of November 17. Both men sustained serious injuries. Two men, Patrick Moyse and Michael Petitto, were arrested at the scene of the crime, and a third is being sought. During the arraignment of Moyse and Petitto, the D.A.'s office reduced the felonies to misdemeanors. In the last issue of the *Native*, Sasser noted that the D.A.'s report on the crime had



Photograph by Roy Mazonick

understated the injuries incurred.

With the help of several gay lawyers and the Chelsea Gay Association, Sasser and Sapienza circulated flyers in an attempt to pack the courtroom for the first hearing in order to impress upon the court the seriousness of the case. When the defendants entered the courtroom, several in the group booed and hissed. They were reprimanded by the judge, but the point of their presence had been made.

Sasser and Sapienza were not in the courtroom at the time of the hearing. They were in another part of the Manhattan Criminal Court building talking with employees of the district attorney's office. They had been asked to sign affidavits to the charges, but because of the inaccuracies in the affidavits, they refused.

Apparently due to the presence of the community in the courtroom—and because several lawyers had placed pressure on the D.A.'s office—the matter

was referred to a grand jury, and on November 25th, a multiple felony indictment was handed down against both Moyse and Petitto. According to Sasser, "We're lucky. It shook up the D.A.'s office, and we ended up getting an excellent assistant district attorney [assigned to the case]."

The case has revealed a couple of disturbing practices on the part of the district attorney's office. Sasser has been informed by monitors of the New York City criminal justice system that the district attorney's office downplays the prosecution of less-than-fatal crimes which occur in certain areas of the city at certain times. Given that certain New York lifestyles take place in certain places at certain times, one wonders if such a policy, however informally administered, might not increase the likelihood of assaults against gays being charged as misdemeanors by the D.A.'s office. (Obviously, other minority groups in other parts of the city could

also be hurt by such a policy.) A spokesperson for the district attorney's office said, however, that "every case is charged on its own merits" and that there is no such informal policy in the D.A.'s office.

David Sasser also believes there is some sort of minimum-number-of-stitches rule that may explain the inaccuracies in the report filed by the district attorney's office. Sasser believes that six or fewer stitches tend to put a beating into a misdemeanor category. (The report filed by the D.A. on Sasser, who received an injury requiring eleven facial stitches, inaccurately said there were six.) According to the spokesperson for the D.A.'s office, the guidelines are not that specific.

The next step in the Sasser/Sapienza case will be a Supreme Court arraignment on December 22. Sasser has expressed concern that the gay court-watchers avoid hissing or booing at that level of the court system, because to do so might hurt the prosecution.

An ironic footnote: Vincent Sapienza, the man who was rollerskating in the Village and was the first attacked, had been visiting New York. He was so moved by the outpouring of help and concern from the gay community that he has decided to make New York his home.

## Coke Arrests

By David Rothenberg

**R**ecently, I was a guest at a supper party. There were about a dozen people there; some I knew and a few were strangers. They were mostly professional people, representing the much maligned "middle class." "Respectable" is a word which leaps to my lips when I think of that gathered crew.

After the meal, I noticed a little action over in a corner of the living room. It appeared as if cocaine was being offered to a couple of men by a third individual, and some money was exchanged.

I excused myself to the host. He picked up on my response, made a little fuss, and called me "paranoid, judgmental, and self-righteous." I called it smart and walked out.

My experience in the last few years, working with ex-convicts, persons arrested, and people awaiting trial, tells me that I don't want to be anywhere that drug sales are taking place.

I don't take drugs. That is a personal choice. If someone else wants to, that is his option.

If he is buying or selling, he had better know what ballpark he's in.

Drug duffers and dabblers should become acquainted with the fine print of the New York State drug laws. Even with the recent amendments to the Rockefeller Drug Law, this state has the most unreasonable drug laws in the nation. It has less to do with reducing crime than with conveying the illusion that crime is being battled, but it is reality. You have a better chance of doing time in this state if you sell cocaine to your lover than if you pick up a club or a knife and go on a "fag-beating" siege down Christopher Street.

The jails and prisons of this state are filled with men and women who were selling coke to friends and friends of friends. Many of them have had no previous arrest records and are doing up to fifteen years for their drug sales. There is little or no press coverage of these convictions. Nor is there coverage of the shakedown by narco agents, who are attempting to make those persons in to informers for the state. These practices are almost epidemic within the gay community and its rippling effects make it the amoebic dysentery of social justice.

Here's a road map to Sing Sing. Rather than belabor the point, I'll take

you through one case.

Mickey is a 28-year-old businessman. He was taking home a nice salary but his expenses for Studio 54, new clothes, and weekends on the Pines exceeded his income. Mickey has been exposed to enough drugs on the gay scene to know who was selling. An acquaintance, Jack, convinced him that selling was the best and safest way to make quick money. Mickey could double his income by merely providing cocaine to his immediate circle of friends. What could be simpler? Jack would get Mickey his cocaine, acting as the middleman.

Mickey's life hardly changed. He continued living the same life for months, discoing, dancing, and supplying a dozen friends with cocaine. Money was coming in. What Mickey did not know was that Jack had been busted by a narco agent. And Jack had made a deal: he would not be prosecuted if he could finger other drug pushers. Jack would not go up the ladder in identifying traffickers because he knew that would be dangerous. Jack set up five of his small-time pushers, one of whom was Mickey. What had seemed safe and sure for Mickey suddenly became a nightmare. His whole world caved in.

Mickey faced fifteen years in prison. The D.A.'s office offered him the same deal which offered Jack: Mickey was asked to set up other pushers. He revealed that he knew only Jack and a couple of others. The D.A.'s representative told Mickey that they would branch him out to help ensnare other pushers, and that there would be no prosecution if he cooperated. If he didn't, he would be going upstate. He was told, "Listen, you're gay, small, cute, and not from the streets. They'll make mincemeat of you in the joint."

Mickey didn't like the prospect of jail, but he began having nightmares about "setting up" people. He realized that he would be invading a world that was alien to him. He surmised that he could be wiped out by either side.

His estimation was not fantasy. Several "unsolved" murders—including those of gay men—are drug connected, according to inside criminal justice sources.

The reality, as Mickey learned, is not just a disco party kick. Once you start dealing with coke, you are never far removed from people who are playing a very serious game—big-time drug dealers and the D.A.'s office.

(Continued on Page 5)



# The Chelsea Solution

By Sean Lawrence

1.5 gay people will be dialing 691-7950 today.

People like a fifty-year-old man from the Upper East Side. He called 691-7950 a few months ago. He had been attacked by a man posing as a census taker. After gaining entrance to the man's apartment, the "census taker" proceeded to pursue a line of questioning to determine whether the man was gay. The questioning ended with the "census taker" going into the man's kitchen, arming himself with a wet rag and a hammer, and nearly beating the fifty-year-old to death.

691-7950 is about as close as the New York gay community has come to a gay violence hotline. Actually an answering service number, 691-7950 was set up by the Chelsea Gay Association last June for incidents of violence against gay people. On the average, 1.5 assaults are reported to the hotline every day.

Jay Watkins, an active member of Chelsea Gay Association, says the installation of the service resulted from a series of meetings held last summer after a particularly brutal assault by a Chelsea gang on several gay men in the neighborhood. Shortly after the incident the Chelsea Gay Association decided it would hold a public forum on violence in the community. An organization called Chelsea Neighbors for Gay Rights decided to co-sponsor the forum, and in the end, fifteen other organizations in the community joined in.

At the first meeting a woman who is president of one of the large housing projects in Chelsea inadvertently did the gay community a favor by laying her cards on the table. She stood up at the forum and said, "I want to be very honest and I want to be very frank. Gay people are not my cup of tea." In just a couple of seconds she had demonstrated to gays the type of sentiments they would have to surmount. According to Watkins, the members of the Chelsea Gay Association had been trying to get a communications network going with the woman's housing project, but she had constantly put roadblocks in their



way. "We would go to tenants' meetings and she would prevent us from speaking. At the forum she kept bringing up an issue that we were totally opposed to. She kept saying, 'Don't form vigilante groups.' She was trying to create an issue." A disheartening result of the gay community's efforts to get through to the woman is that one person who lives in her housing project and openly opposes her is being evicted from her apartment. The woman is just one of the many forces in Chelsea that the Gay Association has to deal with—but since many of the gang members who prey on gay people apparently live in that housing project, she has proven to be one of the most formidable problems.

Another force in Chelsea that the gay community has to work with is the police force. Paradoxically, one of the difficulties of obtaining adequate police protection from violence has been the Chelsea area's record for safety: Chelsea is considered the second-lowest crime district in Manhattan. Since crime statistics determine the number of police any area in the city that has a high percentage of unreported assaults is destined to have an inadequate number of police. So any area in which a great number of gay men are being attacked can seem deceptively safe in the crime statistics. This is one of the reasons the Chelsea Gay Association is putting an emphasis on getting accurate documentation of violence against gays.

Watkins feels that the labeling of Chelsea as a low-crime district has also affected the caliber of the police who are assigned to the district.

In an effort to get more of the crime that occurs in Chelsea (and other areas of the city) actually reported, the Chelsea Gay Association acts as a support group to people who have been victimized. Members try to help the victims

overcome their negative feelings about dealing with the police and, if necessary, even accompany them to the precinct. Watkins is more sanguine about the police than many members of the community. The police are fairly cooperative, he feels; it is the justice system itself that is failing the community the most.

"Apparently, out of 80,000 misdemeanor cases in 1979, only 219 went to trial. That's amazing," Watkins points out that most cases involving beatings of gay people seem to get filed as misdemeanors. Because felonies are not often plea-bargained down, there is a danger that time will be saved by pushing most anti-gay cases into the misdemeanor category. Watkins describes his impression of the New York criminal justice system in a word: "Dickensian." To Watkins it seems like every case is handled differently, and that is why he puts a lot of emphasis on developing a rapport between the crime victim and the D.A.'s office.

Watkins has one complaint against Manhattan D.A. Morgenthau. Several months ago Morgenthau appointed a senior D.A. to work as a liaison with the Chelsea Anti-Crime Committee. Two weeks later the position was reassigned to another person and, according to Watkins, "To this day I've never been able to contact him. There's a problem with the whole D.A. system."

When people call 691-7950, they are asked their name, address, the location of their attack, a brief description of the attack, and the complaint number. (Most people don't realize that they should obtain the numbers of any complaints filed for them by police. Otherwise, returning to the precinct days or weeks later necessitates going through all the police logs.)

Photograph by Harold Jay Klein

Watkins says the response to the violence hotline surprised a lot of people: "When we first did this, people predicted we would not get names and addresses and phone numbers, but that has not turned out to be true. We started it in June, but it's only in the last two months that we've been getting a lot of calls because the phone number is getting a lot of publicity."

The reports that the Chelsea Gay Association is developing through the hotline will be very useful if and when hearings are held in the City Council on anti-gay violence. Some patterns have already emerged from the statistics. First, the attackers are not children. They are usually between 21 and 25 years of age. And they're mainly white. (One of the few non-white incidents reported concerned a man who was jumped and raped by twelve fellow employees in Brooklyn when they learned the man is gay. The man is pressing charges.) Only ten percent of the cases involved violence that occurred as a result of pickups. The people who have attacked gays in Chelsea have been falling into four categories:

- 1) Gangs indigenous to the neighborhood.
- 2) Random groups from outside the area (New Jersey and Long Island have been biggies).
- 3) Situations in which someone is picked-up off the street or in a bar.
- 4) Junkies and panhandlers.

This approach to understanding the nature of violence against gay people and organizing to combat it is one that Watkins would like to see other sections of the city using. It's crucial for gays to link up with all the organizations in their neighborhood; in fact, the success of the Chelsea Gay Association is partially due to the members' heavy involvement in the various block associations throughout the neighborhood. It may develop that these inter-organizational hookups brought about by the fight against violence will gradually raise the consciousness of the whole city.

The Chelsea Gay Association is an inspiring model gay organization, and like many inspiring models it could use a little help from the rest of the gay community. Watkins says that the group could use the services of gay lawyers, doctors, and counselors. It can also use financial help. Make your checks payable to the Chelsea Gay Association, and send them to C.G.A., 164 W. 21st St., Box 1979, N.Y.C. 10011.

(Continued from Page 4)

Mickey's is only one case which has come to my attention. At the Fortune Society, I get four or five calls a week from people in the same situation. At least half of them are from gay men.

Late one night, I received a phone call from someone who had contacted my office. He told me, "I'm at the airport and I'm leaving the country. I've left everything there and I'll be gone for years. It isn't safe for me anymore." He has vanished.

Nearly every man or woman I have

met who is facing prosecution for cocaine sales has never been arrested before, much less been in jail. They knew it was illegal, but, they figured, so is grass. None of them ever imagined that they would be caught in the net that is out there to grab small-time cocaine dealers. Like Mickey, most of them have been just selling to their friends. One guy was fingered by his brother, who had to set up some people to avoid prosecution.

There have been few television or

newspaper stories about the cocaine pushers. The D.A.'s office is not particularly interested in airing these cases. We are hearing reports about increased drug traffic, money needed for prosecution, and more jail cells needed to accommodate the unlawful.

You can only guess at the political motivations behind these activities. The D.A.'s office must be aware that people like Mickey, while performing illegal acts, are not serious threats to the community. Yet violent assailants are bar-

gaining their felonies into misdemeanors, while small-time pushers like Mickey are getting long sentences in state prison. Over eight-hundred people are still doing time on the Rockefeller Drug Law.

While we're pondering the variables and arguing that it is unfair, Mickey is standing for count at a state prison, trying to make a connection with a stand-up con to ward off the wolves.

It ain't pretty but it is what's happening, as much as Saturday night at the Saint.

## Town Meeting

By Harold Jay Klein

**O**n December 10, 1980, a Town meeting was held at St. John's Church on Waverly Place to discuss the upsurge in violence to the gay community.

While the meeting remained orderly with all of the eighty persons in attendance waiting patiently to voice their opinions, the mood of the evening remained hostile, with most of those present supporting the idea of forming a group to combat the problem. As a bartender from Ty's stated, "I would join any group that would take steps to end this problem, and so would most of the other bartenders on Christopher Street."

In response, another man stood and yelled, "Let's beat the shit out of those who do it to us and then they'll stop."

While Jay Watkins, a member of the Chelsea Gay Association, argued for the legal manners available, such as attending court hearings of those being prosecuted for fagbashing, others voiced sentiments reflecting their belief that the time had come to "stop calling ourselves a non-violent organization. We're not getting any help from the politicians, we're not gonna get it from the police. Any help we're going to get is from ourselves."

The futility many of those present felt was personalized by one man as he told how he was beaten over the summer. "It took fifteen stitches to close the holes. And then on October 15 I had my skull cracked. And all those bastards got a \$50 bail and then they're out on the streets and coming after us again."

Two of the members of the Chelsea Gay Association told how they were putting up posters for a town meeting and were almost attacked. "We got to Badlands and then the truck came down; a red pick-up truck. They jumped out and chased us—they stood outside for over twenty minutes and called us faggots and everyone walked by and did nothing." They also said that two other gay men were not so lucky, having been beaten by that same group that same night.

And the recent spread of violence directed toward gays is not restricted to the Village. "When we called the cops when they tried to rob the Leather Loft, they [the police] said, 'Listen, you've got the handcuffs. Why don't you take

care of it yourself?' And they never came." That brought about a loud murmur from the floor and repeated calls for a vigilante squad from the group.

Several speakers tried to urge joining the auxiliary police, which brought laughs from many who went on to say that they'd given up hoping for police

assistance. "Police personnel is down 50 percent from 1975," the chairman stated.

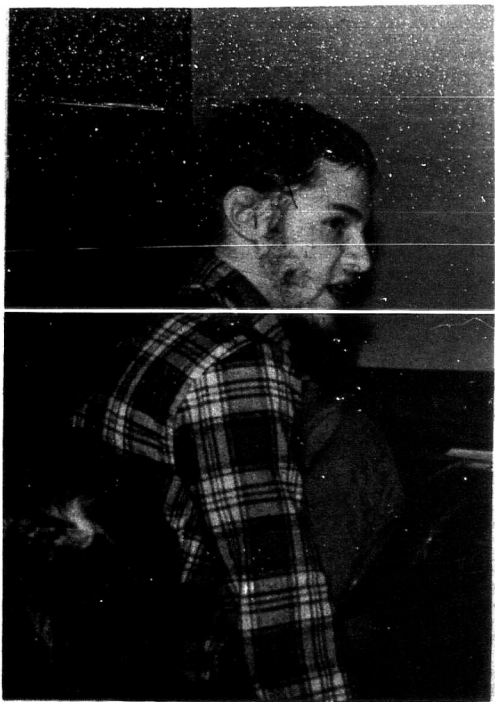
An older gentleman echoed this by reporting how he was beaten by a youth in the subway recently and when he approached a cop, he was asked, "What do you want me to do about it?"

While the group was in total agreement with regard to attending the upcoming court trials, the feelings of the majority were summed up by the victim of the summer beating. "There are innocent people getting hurt out there. We're being used! Let's do something about it—now!"



Photographs by Harold Jay Klein

**-Dec.10,1980**



## Virginia Apuzzo's Address to the Kennedy Institute for Politics, Harvard University December 4, 1980

**T**here are only two groups in America who really believe that lesbians and gay men will force significant political changes—the New Christian Right and gays themselves. At this moment, they are both wrong.

The New Christian Right is wrong, but it doesn't matter, because it is working for them.

Gays are wrong and it does matter. We are wrong because we believe our success will come merely if we have more of what we have already—more money for our organizations, more volunteers, more support from within our own community.

More of what we have already is not going to bring us into political influence and power. At this point, the benefits we have earned over the past ten years are still overshadowed by the failures we refuse to acknowledge, and that is what will prevent us from becoming anything more than what we are now—an interesting new group with things to say—but ultimately not a serious movement.

For what we lack is the willingness within our movement to assess, to evaluate, and to demand accountability. Those are the tools used to take corrective steps, points on a compass used to pilot a course. Without those points, we can only become a machine turning out energy but not set to accomplish a purpose.

It is not that the past ten years have not brought us forward, for they have. It is that we must not mistake where they have brought us and confuse that sense of progress with a sense of direction, which we still lack.

The major difference between today and a decade ago is that gays and lesbians have become a community and not simply an issue. It is still a controversial community, to be sure, but increasingly it is an acknowledged community. Most important of all, we have acknowledged it to ourselves, through our community service programs, our newspapers, our churches, our literature.

Ten years ago we could not have gathered a panel who could speak of their particular experience in a gay community. They could speak of their own gayness, of their own beliefs about politics, but not of a community they participated in and which existed visibly.

It is that sense of community, carried in each individual, that has brought us most, if not all, of the way over the past ten years. It is our visibility as a community and as individuals that accounts for the increasing public acknowl-

edgement that we are part of America's diversity, more than the resolutions passed in city councils, more than the proclamations by mayors.

Whether the gay rights movement can evolve from that, and can be taken seriously, will be determined in the next six months. The challenges before us, as a movement and a political force, are immediate and they are concrete; how we handle them, indeed, whether we address them or not, will not alter that. Within a very few months, the verdict will be in.

After ten years, there is an unbecoming amount of evidence that we have not found an agenda, that we have not forged tools to get us an agenda, and that we are in danger of failing in our commitment to our own community as well as to all others with an investment in our participation in social change.

At this moment, the national gay rights movement is less significant than gay and lesbian efforts in Houston or New Orleans, and has less concrete accomplishments than gays and lesbians in Pennsylvania have with state government to eradicate discrimination in all sectors. The gay rights movement taken as a whole is far less than the sum of its parts.

In our major cities, gays and lesbians have made some important gains but we have failed to grasp them as a national movement. At times, we have even contradicted their importance. Why is it, for example, that gays and lesbians in Washington, D.C. can win more city appointments and more complete guarantees of their rights than gays and lesbians in San Francisco? Why can gays in Los Angeles boast of a gay community service center

with a staff of dozens and an annual budget of over a million dollars, when gays and lesbians in New York City can claim nothing? Why can gays in Minnesota field the largest percentage of gays in its delegation to the Democratic National Convention of any state and gays in Massachusetts can't claim even one delegate?

Nor is it just our successes we are failing to learn from. We also are ignoring the lessons of our failures. We have yet, for example, to even assess the failure of our movement to gain from the Carter Administration what we needed and what was possible. We fail to even see it as a failure that as a movement we took no position on congressional proposals to repeal the Voting Rights Act and days later were forced to accept an anti-gay provision. Indeed, we fail to see the relationship between those events and the intent behind them.

The political game is being played around us, and we have yet to learn what cards are on the table and how to play them. What is even worse is that after the election, one increasingly hears that there is nothing wrong with this, and little is lost. The answer to the New Right's take-over of national politics, we are told, is to retreat to our cities and their local agendas, leaving behind a national effort before we can put it to the test.

There are local agendas, and they must be pursued; but they must be understood as part of a national effort, for that is what they truly are. There is no mistaking the fact that those who oppose us know and understand this. Time and again the New Christian Right has mustered its national strength to at-

tack us on the local level, and they will continue to win as long as we abet them by standing alone. The victory in Oregon for a gay rights supporter opposed on that issue, is a victory that extends beyond the borders of the congressional district. The loss in Virginia Beach of a referendum against gay and lesbian publications in the public libraries is a loss that extends beyond that one city.

Our local groups must also grasp the fact that their agenda is national. The advances of the past four years at the national level were possible because local politicians, who knew the local gay and lesbian groups, took up national positions. More was not accomplished because our local groups did not continue their dialogue and maintain their access; because they took a limited view of their role and their agenda. Our national leadership partook of that failure as well, when it sought to usurp the role that our local groups had carved out with politicians who became national leaders.

We can no longer patronize the shortcomings of our national organizations as though they are beloved children who are incapable of reaching maturity. We must begin to demand accountability from them, and where they prove themselves incapable, we can no longer accept a shrug and a smile.

At the local level, we must dispense with the politics of tantrums. We do not need it, we can not afford it, and it will not get us where we need to go. Slogans and street marches challenge policies, as well they should, but they do not rewrite them. That is the job for those committed to the tedium of details, for those who will understand the value of that work, for those who believe not just that the past is wrong but that the future can be right.

Now that the national power is in the hands of those who willfully misunderstand us and want the nation to believe that our goals are threatening, we can no longer afford to be ambiguous or ambivalent about these goals and how they are achieved. Nor can we accept the strategies of the past, that too often sneaked us into the agenda by the side door. That is the strategy that will be turned to sneak us right back out those side doors. What we win without public notice can be taken away from us without public notice. We must accept the strategy of the long run and not the end run.

The first issue we face is reform of the U.S. immigration laws, which for de-

**"The advances of the past four years at the national level were possible because local politicians, who knew the local gay and lesbian groups, took up national positions."**

cade has declared that lesbians and gay men were unfit to enter this country.

For two years, our immigration laws have been reviewed by the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. This week the first formal recommendations are being considered by that panel. Included is a proposal to admit gays and lesbians to our country without regard to sexual orientation. By March 1, the commission will formally submit these proposals to congress.

It will be the first major debate on immigration policy since 1952, and it may well be twenty more years before we have another debate. The confrontation over the issue of admitting gays and lesbians is set, and it will be won or lost with or without us.

The question for us now is whether we can stick together our partners and work effectively for that goal. Congressional approval of these recommendations is not the test; the test is how we play the game or if we play at all.

We have on our side the support of the American Psychiatric Association, the U.S. Public Health Service, and the major health profession organizations. That is a sharp reversal from the past, when they supported the provision to keep homosexuals out of this country. It also is crucial because, under the current law, they are charged with implementing this policy. This they are no longer willing to do. Instead, they are willing to stand with us and ask for a repeal of that provision altogether.

It is a policy that has also caused the United States intense international embarrassment. Foreign governments, such as the Dutch and the Swedes, have raised the issue and condemned our nation's law.

It is important to know that the Council of Europe also has condemned this law, because the Council of Europe is the very vehicle the United States uses in approaching human rights violations in Iran or Afghanistan. It has an undisputed reputation for substantive and serious participation in human rights as a foreign policy issue.

By the admission of our own government, this policy is a violation of the Helsinki Accords, the treaty which is our lever in witnessing and raising human rights violations in the Soviet Union. Last year, the U.S. State Department formally concluded that our nation was guilty of a human rights violation under this treaty because of our anti-gay immigration law.

Repeal of this anachronism has won the support of many at home as well. Newspapers from Des Moines to Miami have all editorialized for repeal, and national leaders in both parties have supported it.

At the Democratic National Convention last August, the Democratic Party went on formal record to call for repeal of this provision. John Anderson, in his presidential bid, took the same position.

We have worked to hold these cards, and while they may not win repeal, it is incumbent on us to play them purposefully and publicly. To be truly effective, we must bring all of our national components into play. Gays in Boston must strongly lobby Senator Edward Kennedy, as must gays in other

cities who have worked closely with him on his campaigns. He will continue to be a member of the Judiciary Committee where the first consideration will take place. Gay and lesbian health professionals must use their access to see that their profession is joined solidly with us. We must reach across to the Dutch and other gay and lesbian organizations to insure that pressure continues from that quarter. Above all, we must show that we recognize the forces that can be marshaled on our side, and that we know how to marshal them in an impressive display.

In doing so, we must not lose sight of the people who are affected, particularly the Cuban refugees. We must be unwilling to let them be swept under the rug and unwilling to let others ignore the message of their arrival.

They are refugees from anti-gay and lesbian persecution, the scarred victims of a system that holds the life of homosexuals cheap and devalues their humanity.

Their gayness is not incidental, not an irrelevancy, but at the heart of their flight and our plight—the recognition of our right to participate and be visible as a legitimate community.

The recognition by our government

on hiring gays as one step to better community relations. It is in their power to recommend that police review boards include gays and lesbians so that our voices are heard officially. And it is within their power to pressure the U.S. Justice Department to institute monitoring programs to insure that the civil rights of gays and lesbians are not violated by the police of our cities.

Those were issues at the very heart of the Stonewall Rebellion that launched our coming together as a community. Those are the issues which remain at the heart of our community at every level. We must prepare ourselves to respond to those issues when the commission makes its public report.

We must also understand the opportunity we have been offered by this commission beyond the question of police problems. In effect, they have opened the door for an examination of all questions of legal justice. It can include review of regulations and ordinances that are used to prevent gays from receiving professional licenses, which say that we may not be served an alcoholic beverage in some states. It can reach to the very judicial temperament which holds that sexual orientation is a bar to child custody.

## "Gays in Boston must strongly lobby Senator Edward Kennedy."

and other governments of their humanity and their rights would pull away the curtain which makes the suffering of gays and lesbians invisible, whether they are in Iran, Cuba, the Soviet Union, or Oklahoma.

The question of violence against gays, painfully evident with the Cuban refugees, is the second major issue which will be acted upon at the national level very shortly.

That issue is at the forefront in nearly every city where gays and lesbians are organized and visible in this country.

But it is not just a local issue. Eighteen months ago, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission began considering the question of police abuse of minorities. For the first time, the commission ruled that it would take notice of lesbians and gay men in one of their studies. Public hearings were held in Houston and Philadelphia, and lesbians and gay men testified about police problems in our community.

Now the U.S. Civil Rights Commission is considering a full range of proposals to correct the problems they found. They have already concurred with the testimony that gays and lesbians are subject to prejudice and abuse from the police, and are victims of both official and random violence as a specially targeted population.

It is in their power to recommend that police departments drop their ban

I have picked the examples of pending immigration and police issues because they touch on our standing in the nation, and on our daily lives.

But they are not the only issues immediately before us, and they are not the only issues which will decide the future of the gay rights movement.

In just a little over a month, Ronald Reagan will take office. Shortly after that he will send a legislative package and a budget proposal to Congress. When he does, it will surely raise issues of importance for gays and lesbians as well as for other groups who share our commitment to social change.

It is really only in the past four years that we have won national attention for our claim to be an important political movement. During those past four years, we have had an administration and a Congress that has valued to some degree the points of view of other social-change advocates, those who spoke for the Equal Rights Amendment, for the right of women to control their own bodies, for the concerns of minorities to partake tangibly in the success of America.

During the past four years, we also have had the luxury of relying on lip-service commitment to participate in that coalition, just as those groups have had the luxury of standing with us in symbol rather than substance.

That period has come to an end. Whether we choose it or not, we are bound together because those who oppose us

relate to all of us as if we were a single group, a single issue, and a single constituency. It is incumbent on us to acknowledge that mentality and respond to it where ever it is raised.

At this moment, one single example of that stands out. It is the Family Protection Act, sponsored by Sen. Paul Laxalt and endorsed by the Republican Party platform this year. By its very name, it seeks to link the Equal Rights Amendment, gay rights, abortion, school busing, even public education, as threats to the American family.

Make no mistake. If we do not mature in our vision, and look beyond the one issue that is gay rights-related to address the mentality itself that oppresses us where ever it exists, we will fail as a movement and be relegated to a nostalgic footnote.

That was why, when the Congress considered anti-busing and anti-civil rights amendments to an appropriations bill and we did not respond, we failed. That very same bill had been used as a vehicle against us only a month earlier, but we thought we had won, and so we turned aside from the others who would be hurt. And that is why, when the Congress then turned back and passed the anti-gay amendment to that same bill, our pleas for assistance were mere whimpers.

We can not afford that. If next year's version of the Family Protection Act were to drop or modify its anti-gay content, and one hears that is being considered, it does not mean that we can afford to turn away from the other provisions in that act, the other groups that would be hurt by its passage. That obvious fact, that clear lesson, is one that we have yet to take to heart and make a reality in our efforts and that will spell defeat for us.

The same thing is true for the coming budget proposals. If there should not be one line in the thousands of lines that says gays are to be denied one cent, it does not mean we are safe. We must learn to read those things for their implications for us, because today's implications will be tomorrow's realities. If CETA funds are cut, if social research funds are cut, if community health services funds are cut, we all bleed.

But we are going to continue making those mistakes, enjoying false security, even hearing false assurances from our own leaders, until we demand accountability.

We must consider what the implications were, over the past four years, of a national leadership that was only sporadic in its pressure on an Administration that had showed it could and would deliver to us. We must consider the implications of a national leadership that never once, in the past four years, asked a congressional gay rights bill sponsor to officially request an Administration position on the bill, that never once met with the Justice Department over that issue.

And above all, we must consider the implications of having a national leadership that is free of accountability to us on these questions, free to face us or not on these issues, and then still leave them free to speak for us.

Until we do those things, we will not have started to become a national po-

(Continued on Page 30)



# NATIVE

# DC DESK

By Larry Bush

**W**ashington is gearing up for the incoming Reagan Administration and a conservative Republican Senate as much as we teenagers prepared ourselves for the double billed horror shows at Halloween. We would recount the frights of earlier movies, particularly if they starred the same actors as the coming features, and conversations with those who already had seen the movies transversed a fine line as we sought to gauge their mood of terror without having the plot details divulged.

The movies themselves, as we well knew, rarely succeeded in evoking the kinds of frights we could achieve on our own, with little preparation, and our drive to scare ourselves out of our wits came from the knowledge that the next day life would be as humdrum as it always was in Provo, Utah.

The adult version of that game is now underway in Washington, where cocktail parties and phone conversations fuel expectations of the terror to come.

The political gossip is loaded with tidbits to stimulate terror—Jeremiah Denton, the Moral Majority senator from Alabama, has been named to head the re-created Senate panel that will again ferret out American dissidents (a truly horrifying piece of actual news, worth several points on the circuit); William French Smith, Reagan's personal attorney, who served as hatchet man in firing gays from Reagan's California administration, is a shoo-in as Attorney General (also true, but not worth as many points, because Smith is so boring it's hard to get excited about anything he might do).

The build-up, of course, is meant to indicate that these folks will blend together after January 20 to form a terror even greater than the sum of their individual roles; we are casting parts for a chiller that will awake us from our daily lethargy.

Our frenzy now, just as when we were teenagers, is offset by the comforting expectation that three weeks after Inaugural Day these folks will be swallowed up by the city's daily routine as have all others before them. Perhaps they will break from their confines from time to time with fresh promises to reach into our lives and scare hell out of us, but come morning the world will look pretty much the same as it always has.

The doubtlessly banal people coming into power will fail us in our expectations of horror, not because they have been miscast in their roles—indeed, some of them represent a version of American Boobism not seen in this city in fifty years—but because inertia protects us from the force of their personalities.

Still, the fascination with personalities continues as though it meant something. Cabinet secretaries will be expected to be anthropomorphic symbols of the departments they head, and every personality quirk they bring with them will be read as a guide to Reagan's intentions with their department. We will poke through the awful debris of their past for deeper meanings the way medicine men once poked through the entrails of sacrificial ducks.

The Washington secret, now suspected everywhere, is that in real life these appointments will be little more than a coat of new paint artfully used to make an old structure more appealing. The government and the bureaucracy, as they say, will go on much as before.

This knowledge, bred into the very soul of this city, accounts for the attitude that distances the reality of the election just as Provo audiences could distance the threat of Hollywood's celluloid nasties. We knew the horror was only paper-mache-deep, and ultimately no actor was going to leap off the screen and into the aisles of the Sierra Theater.

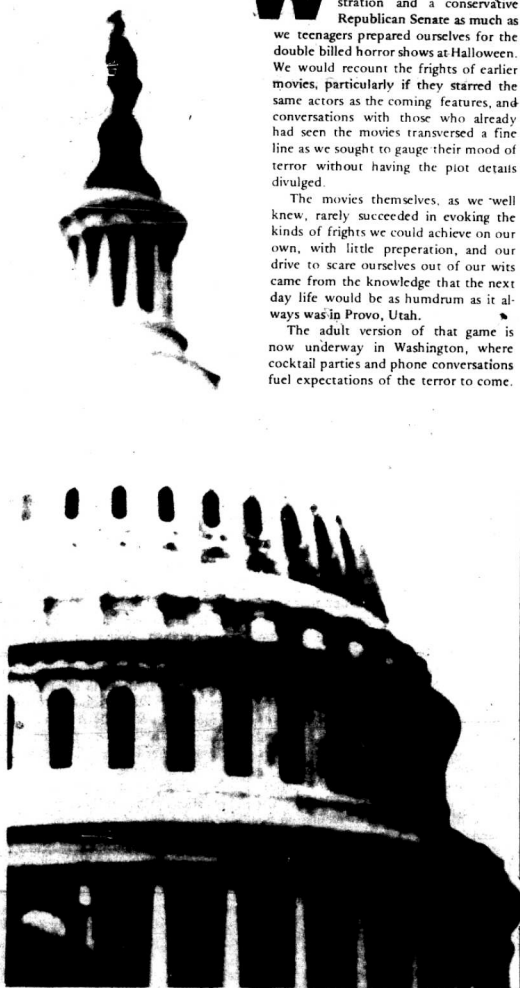
That is the way the game has always been played. We have grown comfortable with the belief that politicians, after the campaign dies away, would rather star in their roles and leave the dull business of running the government to the faceless masses that push memoranda their way for approval.

But this year's election was not like any other, and the voracious conservatives are intent on remaking the government in their image. It will not just be style, their plans promise us, but a substantive redesigning of the machinery that will enable the beasts to jump right off the screen and into our seats. For years, they have felt that the liberals have been doing just that to them in their own suburban retreats and wholly-owned businesses, and they have been itching ever since Barry Goldwater's hurrah to turn the tables.

The horror ahead, for many Americans of the moderate and liberal persuasion, is that we are faced with well-mannered and well-informed ideologues who are setting out effectively and efficiently, rather than red-faced and red-necked Bible thumpers who don't know shit from shinola about running things.

For seven years, a well-funded little right-wing think-tank has been doing its homework on how Washington has created an "ultraliberal" government. Now they have drawn up plans to rebuild the government, timber by timber, for a conservative structure that can outlast all the current actors.

The originator of these proposals is the Heritage Foundation, established by Coors Brewery magnate Joseph Coors and a core of like-minded businessmen as a counter to the Brookings Institute and other liberal enclaves. While the liberals concentrated on heavy-think "white papers" outlining issues and acceptable alternatives, presumably because they had inherited a skill at running government from Franklin Roosevelt, the Heritage Foundation was preoccupied with studying the nuts and bolts of how power can be put to use in



Washington

Perched on the edge of a park too many blocks from the U.S. Capitol to be fashionable, the Heritage Foundation made its study with the precision that marks an outsider. It was rarely distracted by urgent appeals to help run government and used its time to take the long view of what might be done when power came their way.

Through the years, it has provided a fairly steady stream of unrequested position papers and recommendations somewhat reminiscent of a struggling night college that direct mails its course offerings. From its physical location, visitors had to make a marked left turn to reach the U.S. Capitol and the center of government, an accident of geography that was not lost on most observers.

That, however, was before the 1980 elections, and today the pristine white building has a choice location on the main thoroughfare to the incoming Reagan Administration and the new Republican Senate chairman. The receptionist is hard pressed to keep up with incoming telephone calls, and an astonishing 2,000 would-be Republican bureaucrats have trooped through its doors and out again, clutching valuable *bone fides* as certified conservatives.

That would be achievement enough in a city where no one leaves home without at least two resumes in his pocket, but it is an achievement in the old mold of Washington powerbrokers. The real achievement of the Heritage Foundation is that it has figured out how to break the mold of power and create a new one.

That work took the shape of a massive, twenty-volume report to Ronald Reagan that takes the government apart agency by agency and puts it together again as a conservative instrument of power. It was a year in the making, and required the services of some 250 authors drawn from all parts of the conservative establishment, but mostly from the staffs of conservative members of congress. By eschewing the purely political manifestos of the Moral Majority and their other right-wing brethren, the Heritage Foundation now has a two-edged tool. Its study can be used both to nudge Reagan on course and to judge his adherence to conservative blueprint for government. No other lobby, liberal or conservative, has done as much in carving out influence.

There is no reason to suppose Reagan will be unresponsive to this gift. His new White House aide, Edwin Meese, pronounced himself delighted with the work, saying his boss would rely upon it "very heavily." As if to insure that, Meese promptly named a platoon of the report's authors to Reagan's official transition teams, where they can insert wholesale portions of their suggestions into the game plan Reagan will use to "hit the deck running," as they say around his headquarters, come January 21.

Nor is it just Reagan who is expected to use this report. Copies also were sent out to conservative members of congress, where it is getting an exceptionally warm reception. Not surprising, since they are really congratulating the work of their own staffs. Should Reagan disappoint them in handling the new recommendations, they can be expected to

hold his feet to the fire.

An example of that can be seen when Senator Alan C. Simpson (R-Wyo.) was asked about the chances for immigration reform. The response, carried through his aide, was an almost verbatim quotation from the Heritage Foundation recommendations on that score. For two years, Simpson has sat as a member of the President's Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, which is making reform proposals, but apparently the proposals he worked on there did not catch his imagination as strongly as the Heritage work. Now Simpson will chair the Senate panel that first hears the reform proposals.

For the most part, the twenty-volume report is a tedious recital of which agency staffs should be cut, how to amend various executive orders, and realignments of staff positions. That is the bread and butter of government, and just the approach which makes the Heritage study a serious document.

Unwanted pregnancies, which, after all, are God's punishment for sexual indulgences, will be treated as the sin they are. Clinics that so much as offer abortion referrals will be denied federal funds, and the clinics themselves will be operated by "pro-life, pro-family" organizations to qualify for federal grants. The good Christian women of the country who have, on occasion, dumped bottles of blood on such clinics in the past, and even burned a few to the ground, are to be handed the keys.

The unemployed, who were the target of an unprecedented Republican concern this year, will be happy to learn of the proposals to revive their job prospects. The job counseling programs now will be geared to "promote self-sufficiency through family unity." One presumes the uppity job-seeking women will receive careful explanations of their impact on male, head-of-household workers.

Immigrants, as *Reader's Digest* has made clear over the years, are a trouble-

trative fiat," the report continues in a similar vein. For starters, the report urges an end to all affirmative action programs in government hiring and in government contracts. Bootstrap operations by minorities to create their own businesses will learn self-sufficiency as the federal minority business development agency is phased out as well.

On and on it goes—guidelines for broadening the grounds for firing federal workers who talk out of turn or leak documents, requiring security clearances for more government jobs, even hiring a civil rights director who will "take the heat" as the Justice Department abandons civil rights lawsuits. Public interest law firms, which receive some federal money, will have to find funding elsewhere. "It is truly in the public interest that regulations be drafted to starve out the public interest law firms," the report states in one section.

Lesbians and gay men never are specifically targeted in the report, which would have been a redundancy since

**"Currently the liberals are passing off their post-election paralysis as a good-guy effort to let the conservatives have their chance at bat.**

**More accurately, they are hoping that with enough rope, the conservatives will hang themselves."**

The glue of the proposals, however, is the conservative philosophy of government that is taking the reins of power for the first time. National security and a *laissez-faire* attitude toward business, of course, dominate the agenda, but the need to undo twenty years of social reforms is not forgotten.

The message for the poor, the aged, and minorities is written large in the section on the Department of Health and Human Services, which provides the bulk of assistance programs.

"First and foremost," the report states, "most of the constituencies (served in these programs) are not conservative constituencies." With alarming candor, the report recognizes how difficult it will be for conservatives to nevertheless administer what Congress has decreed. "In certain instances, faithful execution of the law will run heavily against the conservative grain," the report notes.

Until the law can be rewritten, the report recommends freezes on all new community health centers as one step to be taken. Social science research, which the federal government funds as an aid to policy making, is to be cut entirely.

"Research designed to advance the cause of 'social change' as viewed by the New Class," says the report, "would, of course, have no place in a conservative Administration. Federal funding of social science research programs should be reduced and eventually eliminated."

Mental health programs, severely curtailed under Reagan in California, also will get the axe, and its practitioners will be lucky to escape with their reputations intact. With the shudder only managed by those truly threatened by a scrutiny of their mental processes, the report's authors exclaim, "This assumes that psychiatry is a vital branch of medicine!"

some issue. Their unrelenting desire to reach our golden shores reaffirms our faith that we are the best hope of the world, but their actual arrival deprives Americans of choice jobs as kitchen helpers in sweat shop restaurants.

The Heritage study offers a practical solution. "Clearly an approach which would be politically safe in the short term," the report suggests, "would be one of 'benign neglect.'"

"In due time, a new administration might want to consider whether tightened identification procedures, tougher border guards, and a limited amnesty would be an appropriate response to the illegal alien problem," the report suggests.

One wonders how tough a border guard they have in mind, considering that several officers were recently convicted of murdering Mexican women who they had first set up as in-house prostitutes in exchange for permission to enter the country.

The leeway given to U.S. border guards, who have permission to ignore the U.S. Constitution since suspects are not yet formally admitted to the country, is the envy of law enforcement officers everywhere. Apparently it struck a chord with the Heritage Foundation as well.

"It is axiomatic that individual liberties are secondary to the requirements of national security and internal civil order," the report asserts, unable to grasp the concept that individual liberties might serve the interests of civil order. The report goes on to recommend that Reagan cancel Jimmy Carter's restrictions on the FBI and domestic CIA activities, and revive the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. "There are a broad range of alarming executive orders in the area of civil rights which could be reversed by adminis-

every major federal program that helps them is recommended for the chopping block. Even the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provides indirect help since state agencies make the final determinations, would be affected. The proposal calls for NEH to take over from the states when grants are made for "sociological crusades, political action, or political education as demanded by the narrowly partisan interests."

If all this is not enough to give liberals the screaming mimis, one would be hard pressed to discover what would jolt them. But the plain fact is that the Heritage report, and its undeniable influence over the new White House and Congress, is not even discussed.

Currently the liberals are passing off their post-election paralysis as a good-guy effort to let the conservatives have their chance at bat. More accurately, they are hoping that with enough rope, the conservatives will hang themselves. The advantage is that then the liberals will win by default, and not because they responded to the national malaise that these noxious proposals represent.

In that sense, it is politics as usual. But even if, four years from now, the conservatives are swept out with the same disgrace that faced liberals and moderates this year, they will be able to take little comfort. They may get the starring roles they were denied this time, but they will be playing on a stage newly constructed to conservative standards.

At last analysis, the Heritage study is not just a collection of the worst and most fearsome dark thoughts the conservatives have been harboring all these years. It is that, but it is also 3,000 pages of a skilled management program to bring it off.

This year Halloween will start on January 20, and there are no guarantees as to when it will end.

## Lucia Valeska's NOW Speech

Lucia Valeska is Co-Executive Director of the National Gay Task Force. She opened the Saturday, October 4 session of the annual conference of the National Organization for Women in San Antonio with a speech which created considerable controversy. We herewith publish a slightly later version of that speech, combined with remarks that Ms. Valeska made in Portland several weeks later. It should be noted that Ms. Valeska was the only lesbian speaker at the NOW conference.



Photograph by Betty Lane

Will there be a national gay agenda for the Eighties?

Five years ago—even two years ago—no one much questioned our fundamental ability to survive. But with the rise of the radical right and the election of Ronald Reagan, who has publicly endorsed the goals of the radical right, we are not so certain of our fate. Much will depend upon how lesbians and gay men across the country choose to conduct their political affairs in the next four years.

But first things first: from Stonewall in 1969 to the American Psychiatric Association's decision to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973, to the Lesbian and Gay March on Washington one year ago attended by 100,000, we have witnessed the phenomenal growth of a brand new political movement with concrete achievements measured across the land.

In California, the State Supreme Court has held that coming out on the job is a political act and to be protected by free speech.

In Oklahoma, we have just filed a complaint in Federal Court against the Helms Bill (prohibiting openly gay teachers from teaching in the public schools), which is likely to take the cause of gay teachers all the way to the Supreme Court.

In Wisconsin and California, a team of distinguished psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers has completed

a four-year investigation of lesbian mothers and their children. The positive verdict pronounced will serve gay us today cases by providing just the documentation that has been missing from the courtroom.

In Washington, D.C., the FCC has ruled that the needs and news of the gay community must be ascertained by broadcasters across the land. The Bureau of Prisons has agreed to admit gay publications into federal prisons in an out-of-court settlement after a three-year lawsuit. We are able to get the White House Conference on Families to listen to the needs and aspirations of gay families at conferences held throughout the country. The National Convention Project, with the help of gay and lesbian delegates from around the country, came away from the Democratic National Convention with the first gay rights plank in American history.

Other significant achievements include:

- Tax exemption for gay organizations (Carter, mid-Seventies);
- Teeth into Civil Service Reform Act (Carter, 1980);
- Extension of job protection (e.g., Peace Corps, 1979);
- Presidential Administration support of Cranston legislation;
- Directive from Attorney General's office that opened our borders;
- Cooperation of U.S. Government in resettlement of gay Cuban refugees;
- Two openly gay Presidential appointments.

In the past ten years, we have set down an institutionalized network of communications with ninety gay publications and twenty gay radio stations.

Let me talk for just a moment about the National Gay Task Force, its resources, its membership, and some of its obstacles. At NGTF, there is a first staff

of eight, some fifty volunteers, and a national membership of 10,000. The annual budget is \$350,000. The only other national gay civil rights organization is Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL), which is a one-person operation with a board of directors that hasn't met in two years and an annual budget of \$50,000.

There are two major obstacles which must be dealt with if we are to sustain ourselves through the crush of the next few years. First, the great problem internally is obviously a lack of support from the national lesbian and gay community for a national agenda. Ten thousand members is a meager showing from a population of twenty million. Think of what kind of an effect could be made by the National Gay Task Force with a budget of \$600,000,000 compared to our \$350,000.

The next greatest internal obstacle concerns the relationship between women and men, and the lack of adequate participation of lesbians in the gay rights movement.

Now I don't want to make the situation on this front seem more bleak than it is. There are a number of lesbians putting a tremendous amount of energy into the mixed movement. We are better off this year than last, and there is a growing sense on the part of lesbians that we have too much to gain (or lose, as the case may be) by not staking out our territory in the mixed movement.

As we try to pull this coalition between women and men together, I think we are going to have to build a whole new consciousness within both the lesbian and gay male communities. What I would like to briefly outline for you here are some of the elements which I think that new vision will contain.

First we must validate the assertion that there are two different communities. As such we are not creating a whole new entity; we are building a coalition.

We are not erasing the lines between women and men, but rather understanding them. And in a very pragmatic

fashion, we are creating a well-defined agenda, which both women and men in the movement will support over and above the differences. But this cannot be done successfully unless the differences are aired, listened to, and respected.

We start from the premise that gay civil rights—basic protection under law and massive change in social attitudes toward same-sex love—is necessary, and neither of us—women or men—can win the battle alone.

Yet to the idea of working with gay men to achieve this goal, my gut level response has often been: "If men would just put their clothes on and come in from the bushes, we could get on with the real job."

Sally Gearhart expands the theme when she states flatly, "Weary lesbians have spent untold hours explaining to middle America that lesbians do not worry about venereal disease, do not have sex in public bathrooms... and do not want to go to the barricades fighting for the lowering of the age of consent for sexual acts." I will continue to defend my gay brother's right to his sexuality... though many of its dimensions embarrass and frighten me... I am frustrated and angry that many gay men remain totally oblivious to the effect on women of their objectification of each other, their obsession with youth and beauty, their camped-up consumerism, and their demand for freer sexual expression.

And, indeed, there are many things in the visible traditions of gay male culture that lesbians do not aspire to. But we must not forget that there are many things in traditional female culture that we do not aspire to either. The heritage in both cases is not created hormonally. Culture means human-made. One is not born sado-masochistic.

Gearhart and many lesbians now speak from developed feminist perspective—one that I think gay men as a whole will eventually accept and respect. In the interim, what holds back male approval of feminist principles and strategies is that the push for understanding has been made primarily in one direction: from female to male.

At the annual NOW conference, held this year in San Antonio, I asked the audience (primarily made up of straight

women and lesbians) to shout out, "I am a faggot!"

It was not a popular request. But I believe the discomfort comes partly in direct proportion to the current level of ignorance about gay male life among women, straight and lesbian.

Why the ignorance? Why the one-way push for consciousness? There are a number of significant factors—all related to fundamental differences between gay and feminist movements and between lesbian and gay male experiences.

*The gay movement is roughly a century behind the feminist movement.* In terms of a political focus, the gay movement only began eleven years ago. Feminists were taking on the major social institutions of the church, the psychiatric profession, and the state long before gay people had any notion that they even numbered more than a handful worldwide.

Yet feminists (lesbians and straights) expect this infant movement to be where they are right now. Feminists need to curb their self-righteousness. It must be realized that it took the blood, sweat, and tears of hundreds of thousands of women, numbers of years, to bring the feminist movement to where it is today. Think of the recent Democratic Convention and what was accomplished there by women! Women broke the Carter whip system on women's issues and in doing so radicalized the party platform on women's concerns—over and above the firm opposition of Democratic Party leadership. *This victory was over one hundred and thirty years in the making.* It was not achieved by our mothers, but by us. Not because our mothers are stupid and we're so smart. It is because we've had help that our mothers did not have, hope that our mothers did not have, and resources that our mothers did not have. Most important, we've had years now on the battle front from which many hard lessons have been learned.

Gay men have not had this process. They have not yet taken on an analysis of sex roles and their relationship to it (with the exception perhaps of a few isolated academics, but certainly without a movement to articulate it). Just because one angle has been articulated, does not mean the other angle doesn't exist.

It is my contention that many gay men are somewhat terrified by women's head start, super organization, vast in-depth social networking. Not because they hate women, although some surely do, but because they have been abused by people who have had control over their lives. And women, through feminism, have unprecedented control over the fate of gay men.

Past the fundamental historical lag between feminist and gay movements, there are a number of other primary differences. One: the inevitable and unique trail of organizing an *invisible constituency*. Two: this concerns the nature of gay existence and gay oppression. The church has never come out against being female. The state has never forbidden blackness or being born working class. There is a big difference between being inappropriate in certain places and being inappropriate altogether!

Now I realize that it is politically incorrect to accentuate the miseries of growing up a member of a despised, un-

mentionable, and untouchable minority. But in the gay movement's absolute, overnight insistence on defining gayness as the latest and greatest wonderful world event—in the process of attempting to literally replace a totally negative identity with a totally positive identity—some real people have gotten stuck in the middle. I'm sure you know a few.

In our enthusiasm, we have denied ourselves any kind of reasonable transition.

You can't just become *that* overnight when you're *that* bad to begin with.

Three: unlike women's culture, gay culture is an *outlaw* culture. At its core it thrives on breaking majority rule on disobedience. That gay men balk at the new set of rules that feminists present is the least we might expect. If gay men so readily picked up rules laid down for them, they probably wouldn't be gay in the first place. You can't force rules on a group which defies the rules by its very existence—not without a little preliminary havoc.

We know from history that gay men ought to be the first feminist men. For, like women, they suffer wholeheartedly the world over from a gross and inhuman application of sex role. I believe that when gay men are encouraged to

of our entire social order—sex role, it won't be overnight. It will be generational. It will be hard. People do not let go of survival patterns easily.

Six: the final difference I would mention that severely affects the climate of gay-feminist coalition is the advent of lesbian-feminism.

Back in 1970, or before, around the time of the Stonewall riots, radical feminists ran into gay women who were just bursting out of their closets and a hybrid was born. Quite virulent in the beginning, it flatly asserted: "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism the practice." The first manifesto asserted: "A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion." The idea promulgated in wide circles was that it is not only good to be gay, but it is superior to be lesbian. Organic feminism.

It's interesting that when straight society thinks of recruitment it still thinks of gay men going after young straight men, or worse, boys. Meanwhile, on the lesbian front there was indeed active recruitment of straight feminists. What's more, that recruitment was somewhat successful. Which is why, incidentally, all the feminist literature on the subject of gay rights still uses the term "sexual preference," denoting a clear choice in

**"The response of one gay activist speaks for us all: 'The threat from the right must be treated as a battle for survival and it must be won.'"**

better articulate the psychological and social components of their ill fate at the hands of traditional sex role, they will indeed come around.

Four: in the meantime, we know the need to mask one's core identity to survive takes an incredible toll on the human psyche.

Approval is the key to a solid sense of self—social approval. We can't mandate that key out of existence. The general social context for gay people is still infused with massive doses of negativity, contempt, fear, and disapproval. Even extremely liberal parents are alarmed to discover a gay child under their roof. Especially if that child is male. The alarm is real and so is its effect.

Five: another thing to consider seriously: people coming out of prisons, marriages, parental homes, long-term restraining situations of any kind—all of them experience a certain degree of trauma and *act it out*.

Sometimes the acting out provides nourishment; sometimes it is merely cute. On the other hand, it can be sad or destructive. Often it is simply boring. It is always irrational and it may be bizarre. Like the infamous Rollerena in New York City—conservative Wall Street broker by day, and on roller skates in a Victorian dress and bonnet by night.

We are witnessing the beginning throes of a long series of emotional and cultural shock waves, as we dismantle one of the fundamental building blocks

of the matter. In any case, the effect was tremendous for both feminists and gay movements. Suffice to say for now that gay men have never had a full-blown political movement to complement their fight. It has been good to be a lesbian in a way it could never be for gay men. And this phenomenon in terms of women's art, culture, and connectedness to one another has been the envy of men everywhere.

These are some of the fundamental differences and internal obstacles which cannot be ignored if we are to pull ourselves into a united front.

Next are the *external obstacles*: Christian Voice has at least 187,000 registered members and controls over 100 radio stations. It sponsored the Washington March for Jesus with a reported 200,000 in attendance. It endorsed Reagan for president and contributed \$1 million to right wing campaigns during this past election, joining the Right To Life movement in ousting McGovern and Frank Church as well as a number of others.

The Praise the Lord Club is run by Jim Baker. His organization earned over \$51 million last year—primarily from many small donations by private citizens—through media evangelism.

Then there is the Schlafly family: Phyllis, former president of Women for Goldwater and husband, Fred, who is an attorney for "a John Birch Foundation called *The Wake Up America Founda-*

tion. The Conservative Caucus this year organized the "I Love America" rally, featuring Senators John Warner (Liz Taylor's husband) and Harry Byrd of Virginia.

Anita Bryant's ministries managed to raise over one million dollars this past year, in spite of her domestic strife. Of that amount, only \$150 actually went into religious counseling. The rest went into a national hate campaign and major fund-raising effort.

The Protect American Children campaign raised another \$1.3 million.

You know you can afford the luxury of sitting on your heels when it's just right wing religious fanatics who are coming after you. It's quite another when it's CBS News and the President of the United States. In Sodom we take too much for granted.

Ties between Christian Voice, Praise the Lord Club, One Nation Under God, and members of the House and Senate are so strong that the two groups become indecipherable.

As one black lesbian put it: "This is no longer a battle about attitudes but a struggle to change the very political assumptions upon which this system is currently functioning. Part of fighting the right is identifying it."

President-elect Ronald Reagan is one of the founders of the anti-gay Citizens for the Republic, an organization founded by strike-breaker Adolph Coors. Reagan is also connected with the conservative caucus, founded by Howard Phillips, formerly of Young American's for Freedom and Nixon's last director of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

In 1978 Reagan publicly opposed Proposition 6 in California and defended the gay community.

In June of this year he came out with a new statement saying, "I oppose gay rights ordinances because they require employers to hire people solely on the basis of their sexual preference."

Patently false and he knows it, he is not just catering to a new mood in exchange for money and support. He is actively building it.

His latest public statement: "I don't think the American people can condone homosexuality, and neither can I."

The response of one gay activist speaks for us all: "The threat from the right must be treated as a battle for survival and it must be won."

In the past several minutes I have tried to describe the nature and strength of some of the primary obstacles standing between the gay movement and the kind of unification required for survival and growth in the 1980s.

Clearly we must look toward the concept and practice of *coalition* with a greater sense of urgency and a willingness to use our differences creatively. For the nature of gay oppression warns us that at this moment in history we cannot go it alone. However unfashionable, arrogance must submit to reality.

The final point I would make is this: Any movement that refuses to place itself at the center of the storm of what concerns most Americans in the next ten years will forfeit that concern. If the decade ahead is going to have a moral tone, we'd better provide one of our own.



By Joe Nicholson

**M**y life as a closeted newspaperman began with a warning from my father, who was in retirement after twenty-three years as the New York city editor of the Associated Press. When I started at AP as a summer fill-in reporter in June 1968, many of my father's reporters still worked there. In retrospect I know I was really only a kid, but at the time I regarded myself as a seasoned man of the world, and the truth was that I had steamed around half the globe on a Navy destroyer, returned to civilian life as a Navy lieutenant, and was up for a reserve promotion, to lieutenant commander. I had entered and was concluding my first year at Fordham Law School.

My father took me aside to advise me about a reporter I ought to avoid. I had not yet come to regard myself as gay, but even then I was acutely aware that my favorite sex objects often were not women. From the uneasiness with which my father spoke, it was clear to me what he was suggesting, but I persisted in asking why, perhaps to shield my own uneasiness.

"I have my suspicions about him," he explained.

That was as close as he (an Irish Catholic and a homophobe with all the quirks that attend those conditions) would venture toward the anathema of homosexuality. *Suspicious* and *suspect* were his code words for homosexuals, although in slightly different contexts he occasionally applied them to persons with Anglicized names whom he believed to be closeted Jews.

I found the editors at AP were not gagged by homophobia, but neither did they consider homosexuals, lesbians, and their lifestyles to be fit subjects for reportage. The office had several homophobes, whose fag jokes I treated as sardonically as I did racist and anti-Semitic jokes. There were also some reporters, I was pleased to discover, who regarded themselves as sophisticates and enjoyed dropping nonchalant references to the gay world down in Greenwich Village. This group which was straight as far as I could determine, did not include the reporter about whom my father had warned me, a man who was always friendly toward me and never more than that. Whether he was—and is—gay, I still cannot guess.

The superficiality of my friendships at AP—and at the *New York Post*, where I went to work two years later—was the price of my closet life: I was friendly with everyone and friends with no one. For a long time I congratulated myself for not being among the newbies whose social life centered around the office. I gloated to myself when one of them suffered through a broken marriage or the loss of a lover while everyone in the newsroom watched their melodrama unravel. On one messy occasion the jilted was another member of the newsroom cast.

With the exception of a single one-night stand, I didn't take those risks. In my case, after I began seeing men and stopped dating women, the stakes included exposing not only my failed affair, but also my—and his—homosexuality.

But I came to recognize that I was passing half of my waking hours—and sometimes nearly all of them—in a land of strangers. Too often I returned home late after working ten or twelve hours without having had a minute of real contact. Exhausted but lonely,

I would telephone a lover or a gay friend. Frequently, they would be working, at class, or out.

At AP it never occurred to me to resolve this dilemma by coming out, and even after moving to the *Post*, where the reporters were sophisticated enough to recognize homophobia as evidence of ignorance and probably repressed homosexuality as well, it didn't appear to be an option in the early 1970s. Playful speculation about which reporters and editors were gay was rampant, and not all the speculation was unfounded; some of the newsroom stars got pretty campy. But no one came out. The prime candidates were certifiably married, which made it safe for them to drop hints.

With gay revolution ablaze in the late 1970s, the *Post* overcame its customary timidity and ran some unflinching reporting on the blocking of the gay rights bill by the City Council Majority Leader Tom Cuite, a virulent homophobe, and his coterie of bigots. Much of that reporting was Barbara Trecker's; some was mine. The *Post*'s regular political reporters were relieved to turn the story over to us and avoid incurring the displeasure of Cuite, who effectively controlled—and still runs—the Council. Once when Barbara was away and I was about to go on vacation, I asked four or five reporters, including a couple who were probably gay, if I could give their names as temporary contacts to Alan Roskoff, the lobbyist for the GAA. All vehemently refused. I was stunned by their fright and their resentment that I had selected them to ask.

Later I received some advice from Barbara, who was married, would soon have her first child, and would eventually leave the *Post* and move with her husband to the suburbs. She and I were friendly, but we had never seen each other outside the office or exchanged confidences. She dispelled any doubts about her heterosexuality by means of the condescension she exuded after returning from a meeting of gay activists. "Oh, those boys!" she would gush. "I can never keep track of who's sleeping with whom."

"You better be careful," she warned me in reference to my hard-nosed reporting on Cuite's backroom arm-twisting to block the gay bill. "People are going to wonder." "I don't care," I replied, half truthfully. The true part was I wasn't going to let what anyone said hinder my reporting about gay rights—or anything else.

Shortly after that, Joe Fitzpatrick, Cuite's PR man, asked me if I was going to do another story on "the fag bill." I said yes, and the story I wrote referred to Fitzpatrick's characterization of the bill. But when my story appeared, "fag" had been changed to "gay." I immediately protested to Warren Hoge, then the metropolitan editor, arguing that if an enemy of civil rights legislation referred to a "nigger" bill or a "kike" bill, his slur would be part of the story. Warren put "fag" back in for the late editions.

Our editors, more than those at the *Times* and *Daily News*, tolerated reporting on the gay movement, including a story I did on employment discrimination against gays, Barbara's five-part series on the new gay lifestyle, and Pete Hamill's impassioned column on the cowardly assault on a gay activist by Michael Maye, who was then president of the Firefighter's Union. The *Post*'s editorials, reflecting the opinion of owner Dorothy Schiff, supported the gay rights bill. The *Times* and *News* editorials were silent on the issue.



# fessions

## of a Closeted Newspaperman

Mrs. Schiff had a change of heart, however, when I raised the issue of homosexuality on the *Post's* own staff. At a meeting of the Guild, the reporters' union, I moved that our contract outlaw discrimination against gays. Someone objected that this would give gays special rights. Long-time *Post* reporter Judy Michaelson, ever gutsy and outspoken, scoffed, saying it would only prohibit special discrimination against gays. With that, the motion passed unanimously, and the Guild contract committee presented the proposal to Sidney Orinstein, Mrs. Schiff's chief negotiator. He responded that he would have to check with her. At our next meeting, Sidney reported the management position: "The *Post* cannot be represented by reporters who are homosexuals."

We pointed out that Mrs. Schiff was refusing to accept in her own company what her editorials were advocating as city-wide law. Sidney just shrugged.

Up to that point, I had been telling myself to delay coming out until it was completely safe—that is, until the City Council and *Post* management said it was okay. But after this demonstration of Mrs. Schiff's hypocrisy, I began to realize that getting their okays might take a lifetime, perhaps several lifetimes. I would have to liberate myself or face a long term in that closet. And it made sense that the best way to change our bosses' and political leaders' attitudes was to be unashamedly, openly, proudly gay.

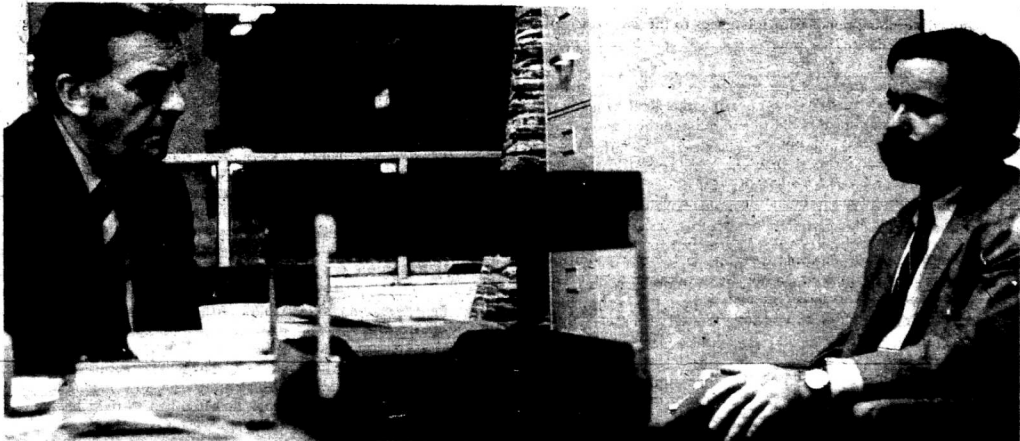
Realizing that all that was easier than acting on it, for a while I contented myself with the variety of stories that came my way, especially the occasional gay story that others shunned. During the last mayoral campaign, I covered the election eve debate during which Mario Cuomo slyly changed his position on gay rights—at

the same time that several of his campaign aides were leaking information about the alleged homosexuality of his opponent, Ed Koch. During the debate, Koch defended his position on gay rights, pointing out that his position was no different than Cuomo's. It was then that Cuomo pulled the rug from under Koch, announcing that if his support for the gay rights bill meant sanction for gay teachers, he could not support it.

When the debate ended, I followed Cuomo outside the ABC-TV studio and asked him if he had been fagbaiting Koch. He became enraged and demanded to know whether raising the issue of the Mafia—which no one had done—would be wopbaiting. "It certainly could be used for that purpose," I said, and then repeated my question. The next day the *Post* ran a banner headline saying, "Cuomo Reneges on Gay Rights."

Cuomo was furious at me, I was told. He had hoped to focus major attention on Koch's efforts to ward off the innuendos about his alleged homosexuality. Equally interesting was the willingness of Rupert Murdoch, the *Post's* new owner, to run with the story. Murdoch's editorials had not touched on gay rights, but he was as willing as Mrs. Schiff to cover gay news stories. And under Murdoch, reportage on gay issues—as with everything else—never suffered from timidity.

In July 1978, I was assigned to cover the beating of six men, including Olympic skating champion Dick Button, in the longtime gay cruising grounds known as the Rambles in Central Park. One of the investigating detectives tipped me off that the attackers, a gang of teenage homophobes who used baseball bats as clubs, hung out in a park along the East River. I went there, played basketball



NBC's Chet Huntley chats with AP Reporter Joe Nicholson on the last day of Huntley-Brinkley Report (1968/9).

# NATIVE

F E A T U R E

New York Post Staff Photograph by Arty Pomerantz



Senator Edward M. Kennedy meets Joe Nicholson in the New York Post Newsroom prior to the 1980 Democratic National Convention.

with the teenagers who acknowledged knowing the attackers, and persuaded them to describe the attackers' boasts and their displays of watches and jewelry they had stolen from the men they took to be homosexuals.

The next day's *Post* splashed the story over page three, although the story had been severely watered down with the harshest quotes deleted. I was dismayed but not surprised: timid editing had been the rule under Mrs. Schiff. What astounded me was the phone call I received from one of Murdoch's new editors apologizing for the butchering. "I showed it to Rupert," he said, "and he agreed it should never have been cut."

Around that time, I fell in love for the first time with a man, Joaquin LaHabana, a singer and dancer with Le Clique. Joaquin had left Cuba to escape the Communists' repression of gays and he denounced homophobia with all the fervor of Fidel Castro discoursing on *imperialismo yanqui*. He once upbraided me for refusing to hold hands while he walked me to work.

With Joaquin's encouragement, I came out to my friends and family, whose reactions were varied and generally muted by the fact that I was living with a woman lover who accompanied me when I first told them I had slept with men as well as women. But I was still vacillating about coming out at work when the *Post* granted me a year's leave of absence to write a novel. I did my writing in Santo Domingo, where I found the gay scene was lively, but conducted in nervous secrecy—very much like what American gay life must have been in the 1950s. The gay hotels and discos were unmarked and hidden in out-of-the-way spots, such as the industrial district. Gay Dominicans frequently married and raised families to help maintain the secrecy of their other lives.

When Joaquin arrived in Santo Domingo for two cabaret performances, the cabaret owner threw a party in his honor. With the exception of two married couple and possibly the servants, I recognized everyone as gay. Yet my friends looked aghast when I kissed Joaquin—a display they insisted should never be made in front of nongays.

I bristled, and after that I wore a red button based on the Coca-Cola logo, which read, "Gay Love/It's the Real Thing." When asked to translate, I readily did so and relished their astonishment.

Joaquin returned for another engagement six months later, and this time he brought us both shirts with bold lettering saying *Quiero Un Hombre*, which translates as *I Want (or Love) A Man*. At Infinito, the posh gay disco, everyone exclaimed, "You didn't come in that?" Walking around the city, Joaquin and I encountered startled laughter, but no hostility. I arranged for Infinito to place advertisements in Santo Domingo's straight press for the first time, and it began drawing gay tourists, mostly Americans. In the end, Ariel, the manager of Infinito and my best friend, borrowed a *Quiero Un Hombre* shirt one night and wore it into town, although I must concede that his raised consciousness was accomplished by liquid fortification.

At the end of my year in Santo Domingo, thirty of my Dominican friends rented Punta Gartha's beachfront motel for a two-day *fiesta de despedida*—goodbye party.

Ariel's boyfriend, Alex Lopez, a bright and sometimes bitchy guy who had grown up in New York, told me, "Okay, when I

came to New York, I'm going to come into your office and kiss you."

His challenge struck me harder than he knew; I resolved I wasn't going back into hiding. My decision elated me, but also made me apprehensive: how would the reporters who had thought of me as straight for eight years—and met my former girlfriend—react?

Over the subsequent weeks and months, I told fifteen *Post* reporters that I am gay. On each occasion, whether between stories in the newsroom or at lunch, I made the disclosure during the course of a one-on-one conversation. Fifteen disclosures seemed a ridiculous number, especially among tabloid gossip specialists. Those to whom I mentioned my homosexuality, it seems, took the revelation as a confidence and were nice enough to treat it accordingly. I reflected that I ought to tell them, "Now that I've told you I'm gay, please spread the word."

The slow dissemination probably also reflected the desire of a few of the informed to avoid being marred by the brush of faggotry-by-association. A married reporter who was one of the first to whom I came but tried through the course of an hour and three or four drinks to talk me out of being gay.

"So you've done it," he said irritably. "So have I. But that doesn't mean you're gay. It just means you've done it."

Next, I selected a handful of older reporters and one photographer, all of whom have growing or grown families. They didn't dispute my disclosure, but neither were they as nonchalant as they pretended to be. I told the photographer, for instance, while we were driving to an interview with Cuban refugees in Union City, N.J. Momentarily and uncharacteristically, he fell silent.

"You know," he said when he had recovered his composure, "if someone had said something like that to me ten years ago, I would have been stunned?"

Because I wanted to avoid an I-have-something-to-tell-you soap opera scene, I slipped the disclosure into conversations whenever an opening presented itself. Talking one day in the newsroom with a woman reporter, I referred to my boyfriend.

"Boyfriend? Boyfriend!" she exclaimed, certain that I had made a verbal, if not Freudian, slip.

When I assured her that she had heard correctly, she exclaimed, "Everyone I know would gag before they'd say that."

She and I had dinner a few weeks later at an Upper West Side restaurant, and she gave me the sort of feedback I didn't get from those who maintained facades of nonchalance.

"If you had told me here at dinner, I wouldn't have been so surprised," she said, reflecting what I surmise was a common reaction: surprise not so much that I was gay as that I would say so. "But in the newsroom! It seems like that's the last frontier. You can do anything or be anything there, except don't be gay."

Eventually, the news did get around, and its spread was heralded by the emergence of the office homophobe.

"Faggots!" the homophobe cursed loudly whenever I was near by. He invariably directed his epithet toward someone he was already talking about, although he often had to twist his conversation out of context to accommodate his curse.

"Faggot press agents!" he exclaimed one day. "Look who's talking over page six! Now all we'll be reading is what the faggot

press agents in fashion say!"

His huffing and puffing about "Faggots!" continued until the day I wrote a first-person story about catching a burglar who had just cleaned out my apartment. The homophobe was impressed. He congratulated me on the "collar." Yes, I told him, I recovered my stereo, tape recorder, and camera.

"And you know, he even stole my International Gay Guide?" I said and watched his expression freeze. "That was really the low blow," I added. "No pun intended."

As his expression thawed, it turned sour, but he did his best to carry on a cheerful conversation, as though I hadn't mentioned the issue. It was a subject he could handle on his own terms, but not on mine. I heard no more cries of "Faggots!"

Coming out to my fellow reporters, I thought, would be tantamount to coming out to my editors. One November 20, 1980, the day after the bloody gay-killing spree in Greenwich Village, I found I was wrong. The *Post's* front page showed a large photo of the accused killer, Ronald Crumpley, who reportedly paid a male hustler for weekly sex, under the headline, "Bloodbath in the Village: Why? Why? Why?"

I read the story and went to the *Post's* Metropolitan Editor, Steve Dunleavy, who works twelve hours a day running the *Post* staff and still manage to turn out best-selling books and novels.

"Would you be interested in me writing my reaction as a gay person?" I asked. "I mean, how a person's feelings about homosexuality—his own hatred of his own homosexuality—could lead to this, where I had this self hate . . .?"

Steve listened alertly, but he couldn't quite believe what I was proposing. He told me, "If you could get someone who would let his name be used to say it—"

"No, me!" I interrupted. "I would say it. As a homosexual about my own feelings."

"Joe," he stammered, looking amazed. "You're letting us know a new dimension of yourself . . . How long have you been gay?"

"I've considered myself gay for about ten years."

"You want to do that?"

"Yes, sure."

"With your name?" His amazement seemed to grow.

"Sure, sure," I said, adding that he was welcome to use my photo as well. As I backed away to go to work on it, I promised to keep it short.

"No, no," he replied, fully grasping my intentions and suddenly enthusiastic. "Let it run a bit."

Dunleavy suggested I tell how it felt to work with a bunch of 'tough guys' in the newsroom.

"What Steve—and every other straight man—must realize is that I, a gay, am just as tough as he is. Perhaps tougher."

"When straight guys understand that, straight boys won't grow up hating homosexuals. And some self-hating homosexuals won't turn into crazed killers."

The story was avidly read by the editors—and everyone else in the newsroom—but they ultimately decided it was more an opinion piece than a news story, and it was not published. I passed through the sequence of dejection, disappointment, and forgetting that I always pass through when a story doesn't run, but in retrospect, I'm not surprised. A lot of reporters and editors—and generally the ones whom I would have expected to be least tolerant about homosexuality—praised the article.

**N**owadays I'm content at my job as I never was before. If anything, I think my co-workers, even those who may be homophobic, respect me more. And it's nice to be able to speak openly about what I did over the weekend or about playing second base for Dignity, one of the sixteen all-gay teams in the Big Apple Softball League. Whereas I used to be uncomfortable, now the only ones who become uncomfortable are the straights (or possibly the closet gays).

My being out doesn't affect my paper's coverage of gay issues. The *Post*, *Times*, and *Daily News* all tackle gay issues somewhat more willingly than in past years, although they sometimes still seem to be looking through the blinders of old-fashioned stereotypes. Most of the new, younger reporters knew openly gay students in college and don't have the fear of the subject that was once pervasive among reporters. By and large, the bigoted only change fast enough to keep from looking ridiculous; for them it is easier to label one homosexual, such as myself, an exception rather than relinquish dearly held prejudices. More substantial change is likely to accompany the exodus of numbers of others from their closets, although at this point I'm not aware of any other open gays among the several hundred reporters at the city's three dailies.

I want to conclude with a word about fear—because fear is what coming out is all about. Some lesbians and gay men may be apprehensive about the snivelling homophobe who would label us "queer" or "abnormal." To me, such labels are foolish. Straight, gay, or bi, each of us is unique and abnormal, and surely no one

**"Considering the darkest scenarios, there is no guarantee that our democratic society might not break down and undergo a transformation as Germany did half a century ago."**

I went to a VDT terminal and wrote quickly, putting a note after my by line that said I had been a *Post* reporter for nine years. I began the first-person story with the lead, "I am a homosexual and I know the agony that drove Ronald Crumpley to kill homosexuals."

Steve rushed over and spoke to me like a fight manager coaching a boxer. "Bleed a bit," he urged. "And don't hesitate to say, 'I work in a city room with a lot of tough guys and a nasty city editor.'"

"I'll bleed plenty," I promised. "Don't worry."

After starting back to the city desk, his command post, Steve spun around, laughing at the ridiculousness of my boldness, and said, "That's a fucking way of coming out of the closet!"

I wrote another twenty paragraphs that described the difficulty I had in coming to grips with my homosexuality. I said I didn't know why I succeeded in overcoming my homophobia while Crumpley cracked under his.

"When I asked to do this story," I concluded, "my editor Steve

can be healthy and happy until he can appreciate and relish his own abnormality. Those poor frightened souls who strive to present a completely "normal" facade should be consoled; the strait-jacket they wear is more limiting than imprisonment.

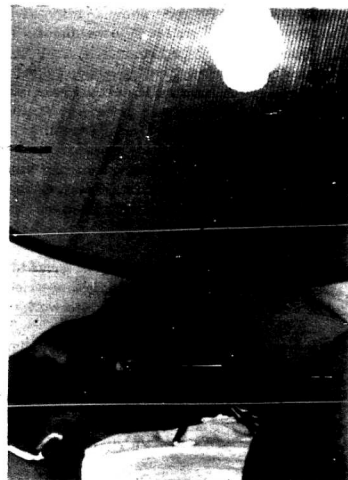
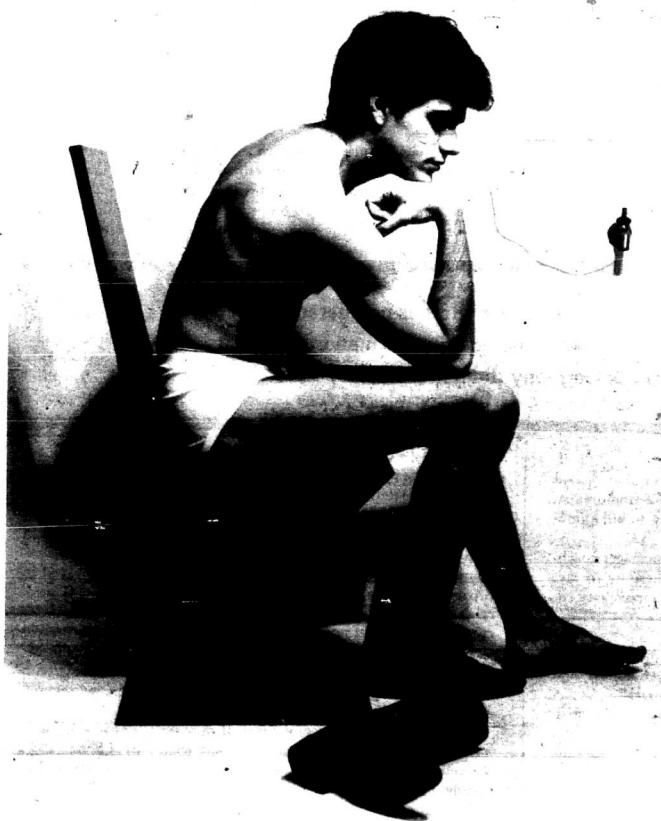
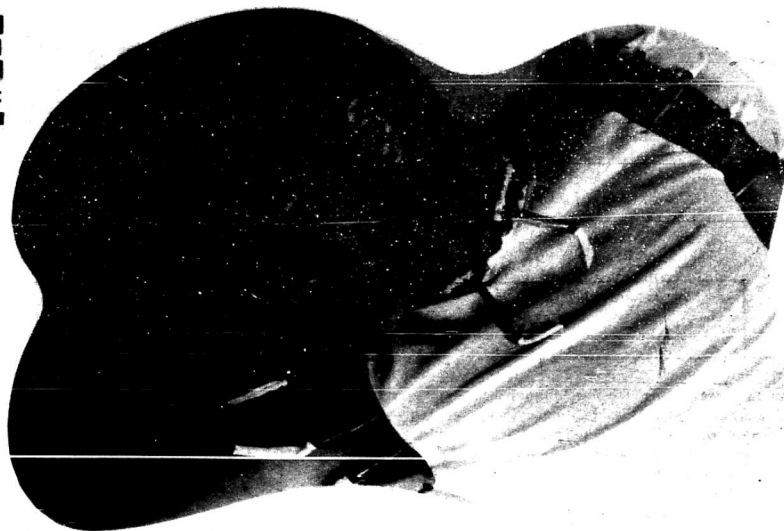
I do have my fears. The future is uncertain. The election of Ronald Reagan appears to indicate a swing toward intolerance. Another McCarthy may someday gain ascendancy and succeed in provoking purges of homosexuals from the government. Considering the darkest scenarios, there is no guarantee that our democratic society might not break down and undergo a transformation as Germany did nearly half a century ago when known homosexuals were forced by the Nazis to wear pink triangles. Along with Jews, gypsies, and some other minorities, they were persecuted and gassed.

Should some dark episode come, it may be safer for those who have remained in their closets. But come what may, I hope—and I do believe—I will never regret having lived these years of my life openly and to the fullest.

# NATIVE

S T Y L E

Model: Santiago Gomez  
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## Holiday Survival

By Stuart Berger, M.D., M.P.H.

**I**nsidious and malignant, the Fa-La-La Syndrome is again upon us. Historically, we know that memories have anniversaries and that the memories of past holiday experiences dredge up all kinds of difficult issues that have been laid to rest over the years. The sort of gut pain that one feels when thinking about a lover, close friend, or family member is particularly prone to strike during these times. Perhaps the people most profoundly affected by this holiday period of depressive blues are people on their own. The gay community thus will be all too frequently a major buyer of therapeutic intervention and a seeker of support from friends during the next few weeks.

Some of the symptoms and signs of depression are rather esoteric and are not commonly known. Examples include loss of hair, brittle nails, and high susceptibility to infection, as well as early morning awakening, feelings of nausea, changes in skin complexion, and more psychological considerations, such as severe motivational difficulties and hypomanic buying sprees. Of course, this behavior merely covers up underlying emptiness and aloneness.

What might you do to cope with holiday depression in a less painful fashion than perhaps you have in the past? First, you might simply acknowledge that the likelihood of holiday depression is very high. Recognizing a depression and understanding its precipitant allows one to rev up one's mobilizing capacity and engage in active—and healing—behavior. Although you might not feel like going to work, go. If you're becoming increasingly unkempt, fix yourself. If you're becoming isolated and withdrawn from your social life, attempt to maintain some type of association. I'm not suggesting that one behave as if one is on top of the world, but



partial social isolation has a logarithmic quality that evolves at times into complete isolation. That state of loneliness is clearly unhealthy for someone who wants to recover from depression.

If the depression has gone too far and has become vegetative (depression with sleep changes, eating changes, nausea, and other bodily manifestations), it makes sense to consult a physician or a psychiatrist. Some antidepressant drugs can be extremely effective when used properly and monitored carefully. Statistics show that with the appropriate supportive therapy in conjunction with antidepressant medication, eighty-five percent of depressions will improve within four weeks.

Unfortunately, holiday seasons are particularly good times for recriminations about homosexuality. Underlying familial dynamics are often brought to a dining room dais during the holiday meal. That is, if you have a lover, with which family are you going to celebrate the holiday? If you don't have a lover, will you be obliged to fend off an Inquisition by family members into your social life? Of course, there is the unpleasant alternative of removing yourself from the potential combat by simply staying home. The result of this action is frequently lonely and isolating.

The members of the gay population need to be supportive of one another during these very difficult times. Gay social events, including parties and theater outings, should be encouraged. The holiday season is a time to become particularly aware of relationships that you have neglected and wish to reestablish. Fundamentally, it's a time when minority people especially need to use its resources as a dynamic and creative subculture to help one another.

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At 27, Dr. Stuart Berger has directed Project Return, a multi-million dollar human services organization which treats drug addicts, battered women, abused children, and was the first to recognize the need for gay facilities in the environmental treatment of drug addiction and alcoholism. During his career, he has been on the faculty of the Harvard Medical School, where he taught Forensic Psychiatry, and New York Law School, where he teaches Psychiatry and the Law. At 23, he founded and was the first director of The Institute for the Study of Law, Medicine, and Social Sciences in Manhattan. He has recently been contracted by Paramount Pictures to develop a film titled The Stuart Berger Story. His many television appearances have included The Tonight Show, The Tomorrow Show, Good Morning America, The Today Show, Middy Live, and a multitude of other national television and radio programs. His first completed book, Your Child and Divorce, explains how to minimize the victimization of children during the separation and

Dr. Berger invites you to submit letters or comments to him at:

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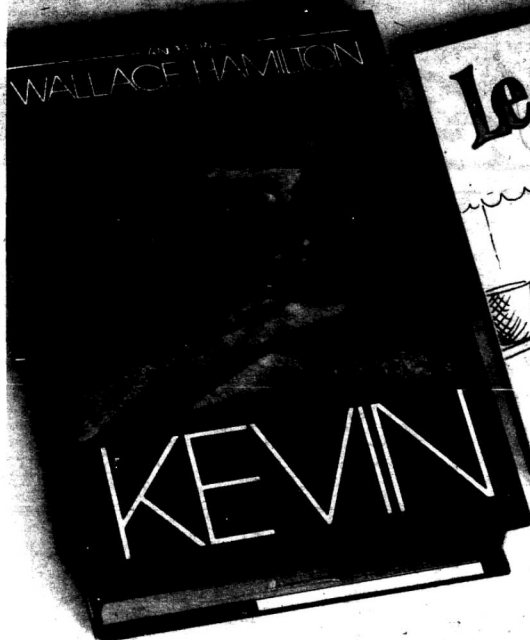
—Lee Barton, author of *Nightride*

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# NATIVE

R H Y T H M S

## uptown

By Michael Grumley

**M**en of the Islands gather uptown. The blocks off Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue are like an archipelago where-on hop and prowl, and jostle one another in the dark night, men from other islands, from the Caribbean, the Antilles sea. Tan men and bronze men moving back and forth, Antigua and St. Lucia, Domenica and Grenada, Trinidad, Abaco and Haiti, shifting and colliding.

Juan from the Dominican Republic gives sex and salsa parties once a year; this year the voices of the Hijos del Rey warble and chant as the men in his brightly painted rooms shuffle and prance and leap on one another in the

corridors. Juan is big and solid, with a wife and children; in his gray sharkskin pants and an enormous waffle of a shirt, he is Macho shaking. Other husbands of other wives slug each other on the shoulder and grab each other by the joint, passing in the hall. Younger men just up from Venezuela pass reefer and inhale wide-eyed; a Haitian with high cheekbones over blue-black skin looks out through narrow slits, smiles.

Fitzwilliam makes ginger beer. He lives on Edgar Allan Poe Street (nee West 84th) and pours out frothing liquid from jar to glass, black moustache curling over satin lips, dark fingers drumming the table as you gulp it down, ask for more. Fitzwilliam keeps his drugs in shiny black lacquer boxes among green vines and red blossoms; his small apartment is like a florist's window, perfectly arranged, perfectly lit. Tropical rainstorms explode in your ears, the rain of Jamaica falling.

You move among these island men, swimming through the night. Orange has an incredible back: the sort of muscles that look as if they're inflated with air, a warm, compelling heat emanating from his flesh. He steps out of his white linen trousers, folds them neatly on the chair, turns, and pulls down his pants, smiling around a fat cigar.

Two blocks south and over toward the park, there is the rocky spit of Guedoupe. Jean-Luc's head is shaven clean and bobs before you like an ebony moon. He is short, dexterous as a Buddha; his arms climb gently, winding you tighter and tighter. The storm, when it comes, comes gently, a great weight released and let down, distant echos of thunder; the light touch of limbs disentangling, the bird calls of sleep.

Along the stream of Central Park West, men fish for hearts, full stomachs,

a night's ease. Silver wristbands and amulets gleam in the dark.

Oswaldo, the tailor sits on a bench facing the statues of Audubon, Lewis and Clark. Beside him is a satchel filled with thread and bobbins, strips of rayon and suede. On his way to stitch up a pair of trousers, recut a vest, he stops at the park, lingers, falls in love for the fourth time since lunch. His smile is a postcard from the sea, his speech the looping sail of a schooner come up from Grenada, words swamped by a wave of feeling, then filling, pressing on.

Johnney from Jamaica sleeps on the floor amid cats and cushions and burning joss-sticks. He rolls over on his side, his arms stretch upward; small black tufts of hair like scrub-pine rise and fall along the ridge of his sternum. Dreadnoughts curl around his cheeks.

Impossible to avoid the clear eyes and soft insistence of these men. Berto is a Cuban, and always gives you something sweet to eat afterwards; there is a Havana dessert called *brazo gitano*—gypsy's arm—that he has brought out more than once. Raymond has a ham-mock, is like skin on a banana, falls asleep immediately. Luis speaks so softly that you can hardly hear him at all.

One is lucky in one's life: living amid this rare and beautiful display, one can't help but be out in it. Apt to encounter a man of substance anywhere, looking out across the Hudson, stocking up on grapes at the Korean all-night market, gazing through the window on West 72nd Street at a fine pair of Texas boots.

Island breezes drifting through the uptown streets, words of *patois* and *bajan* and lilting Spanish dropping from balconies and front stoops.

Out and alive, and glad to see beauty nightly, in the Eighties.

Notes from the  
underground

By Brandon Judell

**N**ot to be considered too pro-gay, *Playboy*, after donating \$10,000 to the National Gay Task Force, has quashed the rumor so dear to our hearts. John Lennon is not a homo, or so proclaims the January issue. The late John Lennon, in an in-depth interview about Brian Epstein and himself: "I went on holiday to Spain with Brian—which started all the rumors that he and I were having a love affair. Well, it was almost a love affair, but not quite. It was never consummated, but we did have a pretty intense relationship. And it was my first experience with someone I knew was homosexual. He admitted it to me. We had this holiday together because Cyn (John's first wife) was pregnant and we left her with the baby and went to Spain. Lots of funny stories, you know. We used to sit in cafes and Brian would look at all the boys and I would ask, 'Do you like that one? Do you like this one?'"

According to Henry A. Grunwald, *Time's* editor in chief, all seven *Time* Inc. magazines (*Time*, *Life*, *People*, *Fortune*, *Money*, *Discover*, and *Sports Illustrated*) will publish a series of articles about revitalizing America. This would be the first time all the publications

# Rollerama

"HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS"

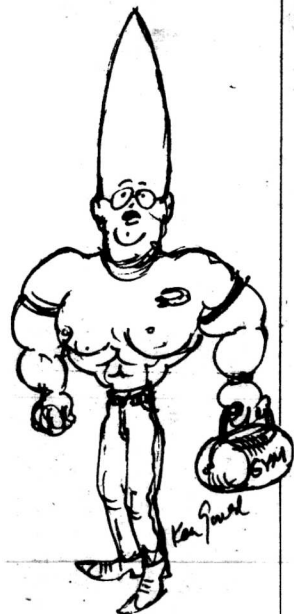
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(combined circulation: 12.5 million) would concern themselves with a single issue. The pieces will deal with what many consider this country's problem areas: politics, race relations, family life, and morality. One problem that has immediately cropped up for Henry is that when focusing on gays, how many pages should he devote to poppers and key chains.

On election day when our president-elect and Nancy went to bed, she exclaimed, "Oh, God, your feet are cold." He answered, "When we're alone, dear, you can still call me Ronnie."

It's Saturday night. I'm anxious. I go quickly through Cahoots. It's too frivolous for my mood and no pinball machines. I adjust my stride for Les Hommes Bookshop (217 West 80th St.). The backroom is now \$2.50. I shudder at the macaroni I could be purchasing. The first room I enter is the television salon. There are rows of empty seats facing a TV attached to the top of a wall. A voice from the machine orders a submissive soul to pig out on his flesh. The acting is very convincing. Inside the next room is where all the action takes place. This area is lit in various tones of darkness. With one contact lens, almost everyone is a blur to me. I curse the lighting designer. Bodies go back and forth. There are two makeout rooms. One is a large closet with a table. It is pitch black. I enter and step on my own foot. I don't feel sexy. I stand and remember the man I fell in love with who worked at the Museum of Modern Art. This was our wall. I leave for the other room. This is the curtained area filled with stalls. The bodies are just shadows. I'm afraid I'll make out with someone who looks like my father and not know it until it's too late. I leave. I curse myself. For a dollar more I could've bought a *Drummer*.



Clonehead

**AIN'T MISBEHAVIN':** songs by Fats Waller and a cast of five, Plymouth, 236 W. 45th (730-1760)

**THE AMERICAN CLOCK:** Arthur Miller's new play about the depression. Biltmore, 261 W. 47th (582-5438)

**ANNIE:** Orphan Annie's adventures after she got away. Alvin, 250 W. 52nd (757-8646)

**BARNUM:** Jim Dale as P.T. Barnum, complete with mini-circus. St. James, 246 W. 44th (388-0280)

**THE BEST LITTLE WHORE-HOUSE IN TEXAS:** As much fun as straight sex in the missionary position that you have to pay for. 48th St. Theater, 226 W. 46th (246-0246)

**BRIGADOON:** A hundred years passed already and it's back. Majestic, 247 W. 44th (246-0730)

**CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD:** A romance between a deaf woman and her nonhandicapped teacher. Longacre, 220 W. 48th (246-5619)

**A CHORUS LINE:** An act of love that has to be seen to be appreciated. Schubert, 229 W. 44th (246-5990)

**DANCING:** A Bob Fosse Ballet. Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th (247-0472)

**A DAY IN HOLLYWOOD...:** Groucho lives! Almost as good as a reincarnation. Royale, 242 W. 45th (245-5760)

**DEATHTRAP:** A playwright's submitted play, some real thrills, and a few good laughs. Music Box, 239 W. 45th (246-4636)

**THE ELEPHANT MAN:** David Bowie in a role most fine young actors would kill for, and hopefully one of them will. Booth, 222 W. 45th (246-5989)

**EVITA:** The life of Eva Peron. Strong score by Weber and Rice. Their first major effort since *SUPERSTAR*. Broadway at 53rd (247-3500)

**5TH OF JULY:** 33 years after *TALLY'S FOLLIES*, with Chris (Superman) Reeve as a gay Viet Nam vet with a few former classmates from Berkeley. New Apollo, 234 W. 43rd (921-8558)

**42ND STREET:** No show written is worth a \$50 orchestra seat, but this one does come close. Winter Garden, 1634 Bkwy. (245-4878)

**FRANKENSTEIN:** John Carradine as a hermit that befriends the monster. Previews until opening, 12/18. Palace, 1564 Broadway (757-2526)

**GEMINI:** Is he or isn't he? Only his girlfriend's brother knows for sure. Little Theater, 240 W. 43rd (221-6425)

**HOME:** A black burlesque up from the deep South. A sell-out Off-Broadway making a successful transition. Cort, 138 W. 48th (489-6392)

**I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES:** Neil Simon's latest, and to many critics, funniest work. Just underwent major cast changes. Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th (246-0220)

**JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN:** A revival of the Ibsen play starring E.G. Marshall. Previews until opening, 12/18. Circle in the Square, 50th W. of Bkwy. (581-0720)

**A LESSON FROM ALOES:** Just opened. Starring James Earl Jones. A black man, a white couple, and political tensions in South Africa. Playhouse 359 West 48th (541-9820)

**A LIFE:** A continuation of DA following the life of the character. Drumm, Morocco, 217 W. 45th (246-6230)

**LUNCH HOUR:** Stars Gilda Radner in a play about two marriages and a lie that grows. Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th (246-0390)

**MORNING'S AT SEVEN:** Four eccentric sisters and how they affect each other and their families. Lyceum, 149 W. 45th (582-3636)

**OH! CALCUITTA!** Not worth the space to review. Edison, 240 W. 47th (757-7164)

**ONWARD, VICTORIA:** About Victoria Woodhull, 1872 presidential candidate among other equally impressive accomplishments. Previews until opening, 12/14. Mark Beck, 302 W. 45th (246-6363)

**PETER PAN:** If you remember Mary Martin (and even if you don't) this well-bring back memories of childhood, love, and faith (if you clap). Lunt/Fontanne, 205 W. 46th (586-5555)

**PERFECTLY FRANK:** A Frank Loesser potpourri with a new book. Helen Hayes, 210 W. 46th (246-6380)

**THE PHILADELPHIA STORY:** A remake of the 1939, movie comedy. Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center (787-8898)

**SUGAR BABIES:** Ann Miller and her trained hair (a cast of thousands). Mark Hellinger, 27 W. 51st (757-7064)

**THE SUICIDE:** A Russian import directed by a Russian import. Opened to very mixed reviews. ALTA, 245 W. 52nd (246-6270)

**THEY'RE PLAYING OUR SONG:** A Neil Simon musical that despite its beauty, has had so many cast changes that it lacks any consistency. Imperial, 249 W. 45th (265-4311)

**TINTYPES:** A delicious set of vignettes about life in America, past and present, successfully transplanted from Off-Broadway. Golden, 252 W. 45th (246-6740)

#### OFF BROADWAY

**ALBUM:** Four highschool students during the 60s. Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. (989-2020)

**ALICE:** Meryl Streep in a musical based on works by Lewis Carroll. Public/Newman Theater, 425 Lafayette (588-7100)

**BOHEMIAN HEAVEN:** A capitalistic comedy. Provincetown Playhouse, 133 MacDougal (777-2571)

**A CHEKHOV SKETCHBOOK:** Three stories by Chekhov ad-

## NATIVE

M A R Q U E E

opted for the stage. Harold Clurman Theater, 412 W. 42nd (594-2701)

**A COUPLE WHITE CHICKS SITTING AROUND TALKING:** Two suburban housewives whooping it up in the big city. Stars Louise Lasser. Astor Place Theater, 434 Lafayette (254-4370)

**DEAD END KIDS:** A history of atomic energy. Public/The Other Stage, 425 Lafayette. (598-7150)

**ELMATHA'S APOLOGY:** A girl from Dixie taking over her own future. Only through the 21st. Lincoln Square Theater, 150 W. 68th (869-3530)

**THE FANTASTICKS:** Fantastick that it's still running after all these years. Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan (674-2150)

**I'M GETTING MY ACT TOGETHER AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD:** A dynamite musical keeping it together. Circle in the Square downtown, 159 Bleecker (254-6330)

**KA-BOOM!** Musical about the last five survivors of a nuclear holocaust. Carter Theater, 250 W. 43rd (391-1880)

**MOMA:** The Viet Nam war has disillusioned an American family. Muses Theater, Broadway and 73rd (869-3982)

**ONE MO' TIME:** A beautiful little musical that shouldn't be missed. Village Gate, 160 Bleecker (475-5120)

**REALLY ROSIE:** Another kiddie acted musical in the style of *BUGSY MALONE*. American Place Theater, 111 West 46th (246-3226)

**SCRAMBLED FEET:** One of Off Broadway's funniest and craziest (or sanest) shows. Village Gate, 160 Bleecker (982-9292)

**THE SLAB BOYS:** Teenage workers rebel in this play set in 1957 Glasgow. Through the 21st. Hudson Guild Theater, 441 W. 26th (924-8782)

**TRIXIE TRUE, TEEN DETECTIVE:** Reviewed in this issue. Theater de Lys, 121 Christopher St. (924-8782)

**TRUE WEST:** A new play by Pulitzer-Prize winner Sam Shepard. Public Theater, 425 Lafayette (598-7100)

**WE WON'T PAY! WE WON'T PAY!** Buyers revolt in this new comedy. Chelsea Theater Center, 407 W. 43rd (541-8394)

**THE WINSLOW BOY:** A revival of the 1947 Rattigan play. Roundabout Stage Two, 307 W. 26th (242-7800)

**WISH ME MAZEL TOV:** A yiddish musical with english narration about the rich man being trapped by the poor girl. Through January 4, at Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd (921-9447)

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# NATIVE

T H E A T E R

By Harold Jay Klein

**W**ith so many of us using the holiday season to catch up on the Broadway offerings we haven't had the time (or cash) to see, knowing which shows are worth catching is almost as important as selecting the right hanky and which pocket to place it. This season, being less affluent than those in years past for a decent variety, holds quite a few disappointments for the unwary.

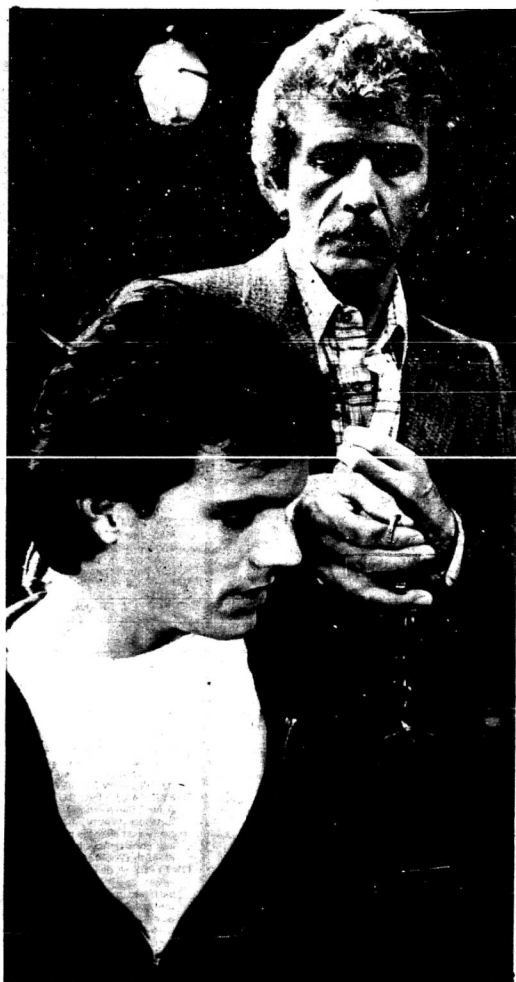
The biggest of the letdowns is the Marx Brothers resurrection, *A Day In Hollywood/A Night In The Ukraine*, with Priscilla Lopez (Harpo), David Garrison (Groucho), and Frank Lazarus (who also wrote the music, as Chico).

Broken into two completely independent shows, the first half of the evening is a tribute to Graumann's Chinese Theater and the musicals of yesteryear. During this section the originality is unsurpassed, despite using many of the songs from movies with Judy Garland, Bob Hope, McDonald and Eddie, and a medley of tunes by Richard Whiting.

With anecdotes, comic routines, and the dancing feet above the stage (wonderfully choreographed by Tommy Tune), the first act sparkles and prepares the audience for the "special screening of a new Marx Brothers' movie, inspired by Russia's top gag writer, Anton Chekov." It makes the anticlimactic second act that much more of a letdown.



*A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine*



As a dedicated Grouchophile, I was half hoping for some of the old lines I had grown up memorizing, but the few that were used all had newer—and certainly less tunny-tag lines. Each line, action, and innuendo plays for every giggle the cast can evoke ("Again, and again, and again, and..."). Sight gags used only once or twice in the original films (Harpo's horn and putting his leg in Margaret Dumont's hand) were repeated endlessly. It is a wonder at all how Ms. Lopez garnered a Tony if the decision was based on the four visual jokes she presented during the Ukraine section (although she was marvelous in the beginning).

The star of the show is without a doubt David Garrison, who portrays a character called Serge B. Samovar, a shyster lawyer even Groucho couldn't have portrayed better in his early days. Watching David as he "trucks" about the stage is like watching the original. And when one of the props broke (an actual accident unlike the other "ad libs"), his comeback was spontaneous and remarkably witty—unfortunately, more so than the rest of the dialogue.

While this show may be less than satisfying for true fans, if you can see it with half price tickets (available almost night-

ly at TKTS), it's worth a few bucks, especially for the first act.

A show definitely worth seeing while it's still off Broadway (and at off Broadway prices) is *Trixie True, Teen Detective*; a show that I'm sure is preparing itself for a long mid-town run when it finishes at the Theater De Lys on Christopher Street.

This show also suffers from an unbalanced program, with the first act being exceptionally weak (so much so that I noticed many more empty seats for the second act than the first), but a second that really grabs the audience with wit, imagination, wonderful sets (including submarines and radio stations), and the superb Marilyn Sokol, one of the funniest and sexiest ladies on the stage.

Ms. Sokol plays a role similar to Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, a voluptuous spy trying to get secret information back to her homeland where she was the star of the Katzenjammer Ballet, where all the men wear the cutest tutus, and the women went butch. Her vehicle to do this is little Trixie True, a character created by a long succession of writers for the Snood Publishing Company (also Ms. Sokol).

The plot becomes twofold: How can

*Deathtrap*

an unhappy writer (Gene Lindsey) kill off Trixie True (Kathy Andrini), and how does Trixie put an end to the plot to transmit the secret formula and capture the foreign spies.

The music is not memorable with the exception of "A Katzenjammer Kinda Song," a comedy duet with Madame Olga (Sokol) and Wilhelm (Jay Lowman).

Unfortunately, it's reminiscent of a high school Sing, sitting on the fence between being really good and terribly awful. Hopefully it will undergo a complete rewrite of the first act before trying for Broadway.

The best bet for the money right now, and available at TKTS, has got to be *Deathtrap*, the long running murder mystery, comic thriller at the Music Box. Basically, it involves the plotted murder of just about every member of the cast, and focuses on two gay lovers (but revealing who they're played by reveals too much of the plot).

Let it suffice to say that it's a play within a play within a play within a play, and each of them is well constructed, and exceptionally funny.

Robert Reed (daddy Brady from *The Brady Bunch*) stars—and really carries the role off excellently—with Steve Bassett.

For those that read Gordon Merriek's *An Idol For Others*, this is a chance to see the shoe on the other foot.



*Trixie True, Teen Detective*

Photograph by Stephanie Sala





The Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular

**A**s the holiday season approaches, it is once again time for the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, presented in "homage to the true intention and meaning of the season."

Almost all of this hour-and-a-half show is a magical reprieve from the daily routine, providing an escape with bold scenery and detailed costuming that actually transports the audience to the time of Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*, or to the fantasy world of a child's imagination as in a rendition of *The Nutcracker*.

Much of the magic comes from the enormity of the Music Hall's facilities and its ability to hold the many huge and detailed sets designed by Charles Lisanby. When the curtain rises to reveal 1843 London with its stores, street vendors, even a horse-drawn carriage bearing Scrooge, it is unequaled by anything on the New York stage except for sets at the Metropolitan Opera.

Though many of these sets are holdovers from previous productions, many additions have been made to the old collection, including a new Nativity set

with a more modern design. However, the sets no longer dwarf the action as they so often did in the past.

Joining the regular cast of the Music Hall (the Rockettes, dancers, chorus, and orchestra), is a new group of singers called The New Yorkers. This sixteen member chorale is well balanced musically, and in addition to their performance during the show, performs Christmas carols in full costume beneath a five-story tree in the lobby prior to the overture.

During the evening The New Yorkers also do a medley of carols that, while performed well by the group, suffers (as does much of the show) from poor arranging. It is this one point that kept cropping up during many of the musical numbers, including "The Night Before Christmas," and the "Living Nativity," where the actual choice of carols used just didn't fit the mood of the scene.

Once the overture and Christmas tree opening are over, the show continues with an original interpretation of *The*

*Nutcracker* with dancing kewpie dolls, teddy bears, and crayons lighting up the stage with colorful precision. It is geared towards the younger members of the audience; toddlers as well as adults sat with their eyes glued to the stage, littered with over-sized toys and books beneath a painted tree.

The final scene from *A Christmas Carol*, is well written and includes an original song, "My First Real Christmas." One of the high points of the evening: I actually heard half the crowd chime in with Tiny Tim saying: "God bless us, everyone."

"The Twelve Days Of Christmas," a multimedia "living Christmas card," filled the stage with performers while projecting golden rings, turtle doves, etc., on a rear projection screen. It is only in this one scene that the director seems to get carried away with himself and clutters the stage with so many people that the choreography is lost and what results is optical confusion.

Perfect as always, the Rockettes per-

formed their famed "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," thirty-six girls performing military formations against a simple screen. This annual tradition continues to be the climax of the show despite its constant repetition, or perhaps because of it.

The major flaw in the program is the lighting of the Hanukkah Menorah. While it is granted there should be a scene involving this aspect of the holiday season, it is handled so quickly and haphazardly, that it appears to be a last minute inclusion or an afterthought. Considering that the scene contains four separate songs, "Twas Like A Dream," as well as two traditional and the "Blessings for the Chanukah Lights," it is over in less than three minutes (during a ninety-minute show) and only involves the lighting of the candles. It does little to capture the spirit of the holiday like the shows of ten years ago did.

These few faults aside, the *Christmas Spectacular* remains one of New York's great institutions and provides an evening of enormous entertainment well worth the price of admission; an evening that will allow you to once again be a child, bounce up and down in your seat with an ear-to-ear grin, and believe in Santa Claus, because as the show puts it, "If you can't believe in Santa Claus, Virginia, you might as well not believe in fairies."

Performances are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday at 11:00 and 2:30, Fridays at 2:30 and 7:30, and weekends (that are not sold out) at 11:00, 2:30, and 7:30. Tickets available at the box office, Ticketron, and Chargit.



## DEEP DISH

By George Whitmore

Episode Two:

Binky's Promise



**OUR STORY SO FAR:** While his friends and housemates ponder what to do with the recently departed Henry Cooper's share for next summer on the Island (it is now November, but "not too early to plan"), Frances Xavier ("Binky") Boynton, Jr., ponders whether to tell them what transpired when he paid a sympathy call to Henry Cooper's bereaved lover, Henry Schneiderman. To wit: that our narrator suffered a carnal assault in the course of carrying out his duty. . . .

"Bink? Binky?" Dan leaned close and gazed into my eyes, his impatience transformed into curiosity. "What were you on last night?"

Ethan's mouth opened, but before he could protest (he was the only one among us who could have been called "drug free," but only relatively), Dan thrust his face into mine again.

"Didn't you mention Henry Cooper's share to Henry Schneiderman at all?"

"Well, actually," I stammered, "I—uh—never quite got around to it. . . ."

"Isn't anyone going to eat the eggs?" moaned Reynaldo, his omelet turning cold as we spoke—almost as cold as the look Dan had now fixed on me.

"I just forgot," I explained to Dan.

"Well, I'm sure poor Henry Schneiderman is still *devasté*, William clucked. "How could one even bring it up? Such a delicate topic, after all. Now, Skipper Phelan. . . ."

"Fuck Skipper Phelan," Stanley snapped from the end of the table. "If you think I'm going to spend the summer under the same roof with the likes of Skipper Phelan. . . ."

(Stanley had quite forgotten his vow to me on the phone that morning, never to set foot on the Island again.)

"I'll have you know," said William, flushing, "he's in my gym and he's really a very nice guy, not at all what you seem to think. I know you two had a thing once upon a time. . . ."

"He's a *bedwetter*!" Stanley shrieked, so shrilly it even drew Alvin's attention away from the steady inhalation of his omelet. "And I have the stains on my Sealy to prove it!"

A shocked silence descended on the table. Dan, however, merely seized the opportunity to get back to the business at hand.

"Really, Bink, you said you'd talk to Henry for us."

"I don't think Henry's interested," I said, feigning a sudden fascination for my croissant, turning it over and over as if I'd never seen one.

"Not interested? Not interested in a share?"

"He said—he said he had other plans for the summer," I lied. (What Henry Schneiderman had actually said was that he had no intention of ever again setting eyes on "that bunch of style queens.") "Something about Michigan."

"Michigan?" Dan said, raising an eyebrow—and in much the same tone he might have used if he'd just been told he had amoebas again. "From whence he came? He's going back to Michigan?"

"His plans are indefinite. I told you, I really didn't get around to asking him."

What Henry had said, precisely, was that if it wasn't for me (!) he'd leave New York City tomorrow and never look back. Thus saying, he'd thrust my head down between my legs and held it there until I'd recovered from my swoon.

"I know it must shock you," Henry Schneiderman had said to me, rubbing my hands to restore the circulation. "But—I don't

know, I guess my emotions are just so raw since Henry's—accident. It's always been you, Binky. Always. From that first day."

"But Henry—Henry Cooper!" I emended. "Your lover!"

"Binky, can you keep a secret?" He pressed a glass of club soda on me and put a comforting arm around my shoulders. "Henry and I were finished, kaput, breaking up. Just before the accident."

Even in the midst of my shock/distress/dismay, I remember, I calculated how long it might take me to reach the pay phone on Henry's corner, to call Stanley.

"Yes," Henry Schneiderman was saying with quick nods of his head, "as a matter of fact, I was packing when I got the call."

I fell back on the couch.

"And thinking," Henry continued, hanging his head, "of calling—you."

I didn't move. I didn't want to do anything that might revive his ardor. One sort-of-rape in an afternoon was enough.

"You must think I'm a—pretty rotten guy," he said, low, turning his face away.

I made no reply. If I'd said, "No, not at all, really," or something like that, it might have encouraged him; and after all, my previous utter indifference to him had brought him to this pitch unaided. . . .

"The funeral, and everything—I'm not made of stone—it was pretty rough on me," Henry Schneiderman said. "I felt, above all, like a fucking hypocrite, I don't mind telling you."

Ah, yes—the funeral—or memorial service. (There wasn't much left of Henry Cooper to inter after the accident.) Alvin, the business partner, admitting during his short eulogy that Henry Cooper had "made me what I am today—such as it is, I mean." Dan breaking down over the Lord's Prayer (atheist that he is) and having to be carried away hysterical to the cab. William sobbing and muttering over and over again what a beautiful couple the two Henrys had made, "one so dark, you know; the other so fair." Stanley, beside me, picking lint off his new black flannel suit. Ethan making cow-eyes at Stanley over the mimeographed lyrics to "Bridge Over Troubled Waters." And the family! Called out of the wilds of Chagrin Falls to this deeper chagrin; to see off the favorite son they no longer were in the habit of seeing, not even on Christmas. And Henry Schneiderman—wasn't it strange?

"Wasn't it strange?" Stanley'd said over the phone to me that evening. "Not a tear. Not a single tear. And he's so rich now, Bink!"

I turned to Henry Schneiderman, beside me on the couch. I heard myself say: "But what about the money? What about the will?"

He turned many shades of pink, then red. "He—he didn't have time to change it. I tried to give it all to the family!" he said pitifully. "But they wouldn't take it. They said it was only right that I should—reap the fruits of Henry's labor. Being his—spouse and all. That's the word they used, Binky: 'spouse.' They were just—wonderful to me. It was horrible!"

And I thought then that Henry Schneiderman might cry. But on the brink of tears, his face got suffused with a beatific smile, and he took my hand.

"Come back to Michigan with me, Binky," he proposed. "I'm sure Henry would have approved. Now I can open up that fishing lodge I've always dreamed of. You were one of his closest friends."

I did my best not to flinch. No sudden movements, I counseled myself. Henry Schneiderman looked quite mad just then.

"But this is so sudden," I managed to say in silver-screen accents.

"Not for me, Bink," he replied in his deep, rich, most-butch voice.

"Did—er—Henry Cooper—*know* about this?" I didn't disengage my hand from his.

"About us?" He was incredulous. "Of course not. Oh, Bink! You mustn't think you're some kind of homewrecker or something. No, of course not. No. My feelings for you were—are—well, *sacred*. And Henry and I . . . Well, you see, there are *problems* in any case."

"Problems?"

"('Problems!') I could hear Stanley screaming into the phone. 'What problems? *What did he say after that?*'")

"What problem?" I repeated softly.

"I'd rather not discuss it right now," Henry said darkly. "God, Binky! You must think I'm a fool. Throwing myself at you like this." He was all remorse again. "I promised myself it wouldn't be like this," he said, rising and pacing to the picture window. "The only reason I've stayed in New York . . . do you know," he asked, turning, silhouetted against the sad prospect of the Con Ed smokestacks behind him, "that I even renewed the lease on this place? In my own name?" He sighed, turned back again to face Long Island City. "I promised myself I was going to take it slow

with you. Give it a decent interval." He fell silent.

"Well," I said, slowly, testing the ground under me, "maybe that's just what you—uh, we should do. Give it a decent interval, as you put it." Decent enough for me to get the hell out of there, I thought, shifting my sore ass. "Don't you think? Huh, Henry?"

"I know what you felt, Binky," Henry Schneiderman rumbled to the windows. "Your body can't lie, Binky." (He didn't add that I very well could.) "You love me, Binky. I'll wait. You'll see." (It was not a threat exactly, more like a kind of breathtakingly simple and terrifying statement the truly pathologically infatuated sometimes make.) "All I ask is that you not—broadcast this."

"Broadcast?"

"To that bunch of style queens Henry hung around with."

"You're talking about *my* friends, too, Henry," I reminded him, a bit lamely, I suppose.

"Don't get defensive. Just promise. Please." He said it softly, but his basso voice vibrated against the plate glass.

"I promise," I promised.

*Not even a word to Stanley?* I thought to myself. Who would have thought Henry Schneiderman such a sadist?

*What problems?* I thought.

(To Be Continued)

NEXT ISSUE AVAILABLE JANUARY 4, 1981.

# NEW YORK NATIVE

...the paper with YOU in mind

Tory's  
by William Snyder  
Avon Books  
374 pages, \$2.75

Gaywyck  
by Vincent Virga  
Avon Books  
376 pages, \$2.95

By Christopher Bram

**M**indless garbage," said a dour-ger in a bookstore. "Mindless, mindless, mindless." It was not a criticism; it was a request. Most readers enjoy a spot of garbage now and then, and gay readers are no exception. Until recently, we were limited to the same mindless garbage everyone else was reading: dirty doings in stuffy small towns, rape and rapine in any number of historical costumes, the glamorous humping of ambitious men and women in the big city. But now, thanks to the discovery of the gay market, we can read mindless garbage of our own.

Tory's by William Snyder is about an expensive call-boy, Vittorio Bacher, Tory for short, and his search for happiness in the fast, rich, decadent gay world of Philadelphia? I have nothing against Philadelphia, but it took me a couple of chap-

ters to get over my suspicions that this might be a gag. Tory's is mind-numbingly sincere. We get a full dossier on Tory before his turn to high-price vice: Italian mother Mennonite father, collegiate first love ("Then David was run down by a stolen car and Tory began to wonder if it had all been a tasteless practical joke."), the pitfalls of a revolving charge, and the forging of a highly discriminating taste for the good things of life. The book is packed with cashmere sweaters, Pouilly-Fuisse, back-fin crab, yak pate, and big cocks. It's consumer porn, in the style of Judith Krantz, and rarely have so many valued items seemed so dreary.

Conflict comes when Tory falls in love with the big cock attached to George, a fellow call-boy who is saving money for early retirement and a little restaurant by the sea. George questions Tory's jaded, cosmopolitan ways and his doubts are confirmed when Tory is set up by the Mafia with his own dinner club. Tory's George's rejection is followed by drug deals, loan sharking,

and redemption through failure. It's a sloppily structured book. The plot stumbles along from brand name to brand name until the last eighty pages when it goes into a St. Vitus dance of complication and resolution.

As an idea, a gay Judith Krantz novel seems almost too obvious to be very interesting. But *Gaywyck* at least has an imaginative concept behind it: a gay gothic—dark secrets, fevered brains, demonic passions, and the smell of sulfur. The gothic mode should be a perfect vehicle for a campy fantasy on gay love. But the imagination and wit evident in the concept rarely make an appearance in the book itself. *Gaywyck* is sluggish, dim, and boring.

It is 1899 and young, sickly Robert Whyte comes to work as a librarian at Gaywyck, the fabulous Long Island estate of the fabulously wealthy Donough Gaylord. Both men are fabulously beautiful and share the same fabulously exquisite taste in the arts. They fall in love. Complications arise when Donough occasionally changes character and beats

up Robert. Robert often faints after visions of his mad mother. Strange members of the household and stranger visitors live on this otherwise idyllic existence. In the final chapters, there is a fine fandango of murder, suicide, and cremation, and all difficulties are solved.

This could have been the core of a decent parody, if that were what Vincent Virga, the author, had wanted. But *Gaywyck* waffles between parody and sincerity, and it is often difficult to determine when the book is being coyly, knowingly inept, or when it is simply inept. Much of the potential fun is ruined by the writing, an anemic pastiche of nineteenth-century prose that manages to be both florid and flat.

I was pleased when Donough arrived. His sweet presence stirred me. There were things I wanted to tell, and things I wanted to do. Thinking me asleep, he whispered some words to me. The tutor stood and withdrew. For an instant, I feared his not returning. Fragments of a dream

Continued on Page 30

## Out of this world

Earthly Powers  
by Anthony Burgess  
Simon & Schuster, 1980  
607 pages, \$16.95

By Felice Picano

**I**n case you've been living in San Francisco or Katmandu and have missed the news, there's a crisis in contemporary fiction. The opposing forces are the conventional novelists and the post-modernists. The first group—mostly but not all popular—still utilize time, place, characters, psychological motivation, and action—although lately with decreasing conviction, leading to formula plots, *papier maché* people, and the elimination of anything vaguely smelling like an idea. Seven figure advances, appearances on the Donahue show, and the starchy heights of the *New York Times* paperback best-seller list are the Holy Trinity of these conventional novelists. In contrast, the post-modernists have dispensed with all tradition-encrusted narrative baggage. Inspired by semiotics, they participate in a sort of automatic handwriting, symbiotically comprehensible only to well-tutored professors of comparative linguistics. A treatise in *The Yale Review* or *Semiotexte* on some aspect of their "narratology" is their Holy Grail.

Whichever group eventually achieves victory, right now the reader is the loser and no time has been worse for fiction than this past year, a year marked by the regularly resounding thud of boring and unreadable volumes by practitioners of both schools—Judith Krantz and Robert Ludlum as well as such formerly real talents as John Gardner and E.L.

only be called high-brow (rather than vulgar) trash.

The only way to succeed in such grim times is to be yourself and hope to emerge as original. The British, of course, have been doing this quite well for centuries. English literature is as filled with "sports," from Sterne to Robert Aickmann, as American college lit departments are filled with novelists. In the past month or so new novels by William Golding, Kingsley Amis, and Iris Murdoch have arrived on our shores to save our foundering lending libraries. Now there's a new book from that aging, Joyce-haunted badboy of English letters, Anthony Burgess.

*Earthly Powers* follows over a score of previous Burgess novels of widely varied styles and subject. Two of his other books that I've read use homosexuality as a central subject. In *The Wanting Seed*, which is set in a post-Orwellian overpopulated future, heterosexuality is punishable by death, and a "redeemer" is born to a "virgin" in an abandoned elevator shaft. The other, *Nothing Like the Sun*, is Burgess's virtuoso Elizabethan recreation of Shakespeare's busily ambisexual love life from which I remember the Bard giving a blowjob to the young Earl of Southampton, after a public execution, just before he rushes onstage to portray Banquo's ghost.

On the surface, Burgess's new novel is far less outrageous. Kenneth Marchal Toomey, aging man of British letters in Maltese exile with his "secretary" Geoffrey, celebrates his 81st birthday and receives a visit from the Archbishop of the island, asking Toomey to write up a "miracle" that he witnessed forty years before in a Chicago hospital where a young boy with tubercular meningitis was cured by the then Monsignor

Carlo Campanati, later Pope Gregory XVIII, who is about to be canonized.

The novel is Toomey's reminiscence of his life, beginning with his first spiritual confusion, during which he left the Roman Catholic church after discovering his homosexuality. It is also Carlo's story, and the story of the two men's intermarried families over the past several years. This span permits Burgess to take his tale from a Dublin hotel room on June 16, 1904 (Bloomsday to you) where young Ken is charmingly seduced by the poet AE, through the jazz age, two World Wars, the Holocaust, the American Fifties, the Moroccan Sixties, and into about 1975, when mass murder is committed by California cult leader, God Manning—the boy whom Carlo brought back to life.

There are enough scenes and characters to fill out twenty *Loon Lakes*. The Campanati family includes a father paralyzed by third-degree syphilis, a mother who dies attempting to assassinate Himmler, a son who becomes a famous Hollywood film composer, a daughter who becomes a convent Abbess, another son done in by Al Capone, and of course the Pope! Every continent (except—believe—South America) gets several chapters and adventures. There are births, deaths, marriages (gay and straight), seductions, typhoons, revolutions, conversions, martyrdoms, and miracles. And if that weren't enough, this neo-Victorian plum pudding of a book presents a terrifying exorcism in Kuala Lumpur, an obscenity trial over gay poetry, a Nazi film festival with detailed scenarios, several sermons by members of various faiths, a homosexual version of *The Fall*, starring Adam and Ydrin (and later on, Eve), an opera based on

the legend of St. Nicholas and the pickled boys, the first gay rights zap in London over Radcliffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness*, a gay porno film of the death of Socrates, and the performance of a musical comedy based on *Ulysses* called *The Blooms of Dublin*.

Given the size and scope of *Earthly Powers*, it is not surprising that it also holds a plethora of thematic material. The central ones are the biggies—the role of religion, the nature of love, family, God, destiny, good, and evil in our lives. Burgess turns every adventure, no matter how slight or seemingly absurd, into a variation of one or more of these themes with wit, musical assurance, and bravado displays of learning and linguistic interplay in five or six languages—I lost count after his puns in Tamil.

I'll be addressing only two themes in the book concerning Kenneth Toomey, leaving the others to those more highly qualified—what it's like to be a writer, and what it's like to be a homosexual.

At 81, Toomey has written seemingly everything possible: sentimental novels about maimed veterans of the Great War; a novel about Socrates, musical revues for the English stage, the libretto for the St. Nicholas opera, short stories for La Maugham about the colonial East, parables such as the Gidean one about gay paradise (printed in Paris by Harry Crosby), and God knows what all else. Toomey has done well. His books sell, there are made into movies, and sell again. His plays all work. Even the opera gets done at La Scala. His royalties pile up, and so he lives where he will in style and comfort, and travels a great deal out of an England uncongenial to gays. Although his fame does occasionally aid

him—in Nazi Germany for example—it also works against him at key points of his life—and it is never terribly useful in solving any of the large problems of his life. Furthermore, he is constantly introducing himself to strangers who have vaguely heard of him, but ignore him, except when they wish to put him down or victimize him. From my experience, limited as it must be compared to Toomey (or Burgess), all this rings true. And, given the state of the public's fantasy over the lives of authors, now that Hollywood actors must act rather than be beautiful, it is timely.

However, for a writer to endure as long, as well as Toomey does, he's got to have some genius. His sincere niece teaches his short stories years after he's written them, in a course titled "Masters of Short Fiction." Despite that, the reader is shortchanged on those stories—never knowing what they are about, never mind getting an example of them. This is a shame since all the theatrical works are described in lavish detail. And since Toomey is the narrator, we never find out what he thought or how he felt writing any of these stories or novels.

Writing—especially something as long as a novel—is a process; and the novelist is nilly-willy transformed by the writing; has to be in some way affected if real concentration has been given to the work. Even the short stories take time—often a dozen years from the first glint of the idea to the published draft. Burgess gives us no hint of any of this.

I admit it is a great deal to ask of Burgess to prove to me that Toomey is an author. But it's Burgess's fictional world, not mine, and I remain unpersuaded that Kenneth Toomey, fascinating as he otherwise is, is a real writer.

More obvious to the lay reader is Toomey's homosexual love life. He is betrayed early on by Val Wrigley—who will pop up often in later life to make trouble for Toomey. Wrigley is followed by a succession of cads, bores, thieves, users, and victimizers that would make Moll Flanders' friends look like the theater party in *Mansfield Park*. Burgess does provide a good, racially mixed lesbian relationship—between Toomey's divorced and maimed sister Hortense and the chanteuse, Dorothy. But that's hardly enough to outweigh the succession of

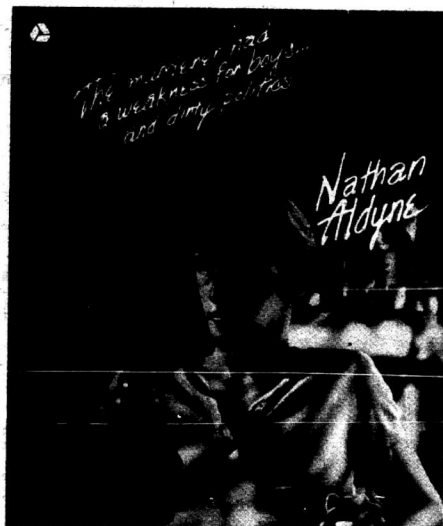
wretched gay men that stalk through the novel. I'll grant that Burgess's thesis is that being a religious outcast because of homosexuality makes Toomey a sort of wandering Jew. I'll even grant that Toomey seems more or less based on the life of Somerset Maugham, whose relationships with Gerald Haxton and Allan Scarle were not the happiest. I'll even grant that Burgess—born after all in 1917—may have known more unhappy gays than not. I still remain unconvinced by Toomey's homosexuality.

Here's why: what's present, and what's absent. Burgess has some cliché and distorted idea that all homosexuals are sartorial experts (can this explain the clone look?), and he has Toomey describe the clothing every woman in the book wears—head to foot. Unless one is Clovis Ruffin, this is simply not true about gay men, most of whom scarcely even perceive women. The absence is even worse—it is what I would call mutual sexual heat. Toomey never describes this rather common phenomenon between himself and any other man—even when they are in-

voled in heavy SM sex. In fact, the only "real" love of his life is a straight doctor in Malaya whom he never touches; and whom he describes coolly and not very attractively. Again, this is simply not true about homosexuals. One could place the most effeminate, unattractive gay men together, and there would still be that dance of lust and pheromones and gonads charging the air between them. Burgess never writes of this. Why? Obviously because he doesn't believe it can happen.

True, few of the straight characters fare any better in the novel; and after World War II, Burgess's world becomes one of such raging hypocrisy, stupidity, and evil that it is truly Swiftian in its rage. Still, this is a serious charge against *Earthly Powers*, and one that for me hobbles its otherwise thoroughbred qualities. It might prove the decisive factor for any gay reader of the novel.

However, if you are a Burgess fan, or simply looking for a very good book, immeasurably richer in its parts than in its total effect, but at least a real novel, *Earthly Powers* is worth the time, and importantly, the price.



## Striking Gold

*Vermilion*  
by Nathan Aldyne  
Avon Books, 1980  
189 pages, \$2.25

By John Preston

**T**he detective novel has traditionally had more homosexual characters than other types of American fiction. Gay male characteristics have been used to intensify the macho hero's distaste for a char-

actor (Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*); these characteristics could also be used to develop the psychological investigations that often fascinated detective novelists (James Cain's *Serenade*). Whenever a crime writer needed to cre-

ate a weak personality, a person who had something especially horrible in his past that warranted blackmail, or an atmosphere of intense evil, the easiest route was to make his character homosexual.

One of the first shifts in this pattern occurred when George Baxt published his trilogy, which included a central gay character: Detective Pharaoh Love. (One of Baxt's volumes has recently been reissued by St. Martin's Press, *A Queer Kind of Death*. The rest are now collect-ors items.)

The big break in tradition came with Joseph Hansen's David Brandesetter series, which is a surprisingly good-selling serial of volumes that presents us with one of the first real gay heroes in modern American writing.

With all this activity in the detective novel genre, it's not surprising that a substantial number of new novels are crime-oriented. The detective novel feeds on the outcast and the strange and mysterious forces in a human and social psychology. It is at its best when in the course of the narrative facades and shams are swept aside to display the real motivations of its characters—both for good and evil. Originally, so many homosexuals were included because it was easy and dramatic to expose them. But the new detective novel uses homosexual characters to expose others—quite a remarkable shift in emphasis.

One of the very best of these books is Nathan Aldyne's *Vermilion*. Set in Boston, this extremely readable novel begins with the death of a young, not very important hustler. The disposal of his body on the lawn of a homophobic state legislator seems to be an attempt to embarrass this male Anita Bryant. He uses all the pressure available to his political machine to try to force the Boston police to find the killer—quickly.

William Searcy is the vice officer assigned to the case. He can never quite figure out what's going on. He expects homosexuals he's interviewing to be

bitchy, self-hating, and removed from one another. Instead he encounters the wall of a solid community—a community that wants the killer found for its own reasons. Aldyne's gay Boston is a complete ghetto. (For those of you who have been complaining that all gay books take place in New York, *Vermilion*'s Boston setting is chock full of totally accurate observations of the city's neighborhoods and politics.) The networks of friendship and communication in the gay community seem remarkable to the detective.

The two main characters on our side are Daniel Valentine, the warm-hearted bartender who's done the route of the gay clone. His side-kick is Clarisse Lovelace, a straight woman who once loved Valentine but who has instead developed all the positive traits of that personality known so distastefully as the fag hag. Clarisse and Valentine are not sexual lovers, but their relationship is extremely warm and committed.


The forces of law and community both work to accumulate evidence to find—or set up—a killer. In true detective fashion the facades are indeed removed. There's the drag queen who's really a grandfather who's embarrassed by a fondness for skin flicks, an ex-lover with emotional problems, a weird man/woman couple with individual tastes in leather and SM.

The investigation uncovers both the necessary and the unnecessary as it starts on its way, unleashing forces that both illuminate and confuse the reader and the detectives. All of it is done well and in a fresh, exciting style.

The ending might be a little too pat for some, but the book is a wonderfully entertaining read. The politics are so subtle that most readers won't even have to be consciously aware of the positive image of a gay community that Aldyne has painted. All in all, it's remarkably refreshing to see gay heroes in this genre.



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*Continued from Page 28*

recurred, bearing forgotten discordan-  
cies. Where would I have gone had I left Gaywyck? What would I have done with the rest of my life? Isn't life what we cause to happen? But don't things happen without us? Yes... Yes...

Brevity is required for this kind of goo to stay amusing, but *Gaywyck* grinds on for almost four hundred pages. It's a prose that moves its plot with the speed of a glacier, but then *Gaywyck* is rarely concerned with telling a story.

While *Tory's* is clogged with the excess fat of contemporary consumer goods, *Gaywyck* is clogged with the high-grade fat of culture, Monet, Huysmans, Rossetti, Vermeer, Cezanne, and Crevelli are but a few of the featured brand names of the ages. Then there's the furniture—*God*, is there furniture. And opera. And plants. Imagination and wit grow drowsy in a museum that is crammed with everything but people. It's not that the characters are flat, which might be desirable here, but that they weren't even cut out of pasteboard. A couple of villains have some snap (Donough's old music tutor suffers from delusions that he's Beethoven) but the others do not even reach the level of stereotype. And there are so damned many of them. Friends in the country, friends in the city, sinister twins, servants, and priests, most of whom speak the same soggy prose, many of whom share the same exquisite taste. A crowded canvas is no fun when there's nobody in it but Edwardian clones. There are a few good gags buried in the muck. In a cleaner setting, I might have liked the fiercely protective Persian cat. In a tighter story, I could have enjoyed the bad jokes about babies stolen by gypsies and mad-

men who dress up as Crevelli madonnas.

Both *Tory's* and *Gaywyck* belong to a tradition of gay pulp that dates back to Gordon Merrick's porn romances. Call it gaybage, or perhaps, with a grave accent, *gaybage*. At a time when all vague ideas of a gay culture are being replaced by the concept of a gay market, I suppose it's pointless to ask if we need our own trash. Gaybage accompanies the acceptance of gays as a tributary to the commercial mainstream. But does it have to be so badly executed? And does it have to be so derivative? Gay romances have been followed by gay detective thrillers, gay Peyton Places, and even a gay war novel. The detective stories have fared better than the others. Joseph Hansen can be very entertaining and *Vermilion* by Nathan Aldyne, although stuck with a predictable anti-Cruising plot, is quick, sharp, and full of good dumb jokes. But much of the rest fails to work even as trash. All they have going for them is that they've been taken as an established straight genre and made it gay.

One with an idealistic bent might suspect that the publishers of *Tory's*, *Gaywyck*, and the others are out to undermine any illusions about the superiority of the gay sensibility. Our trash can be just as bad as their trash. The leveling might be good for us. But it is interesting to note that all gaybage thus far has been male-oriented. There is, to my knowledge, no female equivalent. This bothers me, not because I think lesbians are being deprived but because I fear the men are being insulted. Perhaps publishers feel that lesbians are too smart to be taken in by shoddy goods, or too few to make sales worthwhile. But, to paraphrase P.T. Barnum, there's a cocksucker born every minute.

*(Continued from Page 9)*

itical force. Until we demand that our gay newspapers give us honest and factual reporting, we will not be able to use them to assess reality. Until we focus on an agenda, a specific set of steps that can be accomplished, we will have no vehicle to participate in national political change, no way for us or others to evaluate our goals and our strategies.

Until we are willing to take the responsibility for assessing and evaluating, we will have no basis for holding our national leadership to a standard of accountability. Otherwise our willingness to contribute or a decision to deny support to them will be as random and yet

as damaging to ourselves as is the violence done to us on the streets, or

Above all, we must know that we do not have an unlimited span of time ahead of us to begin that process. We will be held accountable—all of us—with in a very few months as we either exhibit the sophistication and power we claim, and that we ought to be able to claim, or pay the price of forfeiting.

It is not the decade ahead which holds the answers, or poses the questions, but we ourselves, through the whimsical enforcement of the laws against us.

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By Harold Jay Klein

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**EAGLE'S NEST:** An older S-M hangout attracting the survivors. 21st Street at 11th Ave.

**THE INTERNATIONAL STUD:** Another private club in the style of the ANVIL but with less danger, enough light to see what's happening, films, and a wide variety of possibilities. 733 Greenwich at Perry.

**KELLER'S:** Some western, some S-M, some of everything. Best on Sundays; 384 West Street near Barrow.

**MARIE'S CRISIS:** One of the spots where the bartenders hang out after hours. A piano player goes through every song ever written as the goup sings along. Done in art deco and slightly on the uncomfortable side. 59 Grove Street off 7th.

**MINESHIFT:** It's hard to describe a floor of bathtubs and what goes on in and around them, but not a place for the week at heart or for those who like to stay dry. 835 Washington Street.

**NINTH CIRCLE:** Despite the two tacky mouse heads and the stuffed rat (I don't believe it's an opossum) behind the bar, the CIRCLE has a lot going for it. A patio provides a cool place in the summer with candlelit tables and waiter service (Aunt Grace and Sister Jim). During the day it's a neighborhood bar attracting writers, Broadway treasures, businessmen, and all served by Jimmy, the best bartender in town. An additional bar downstairs open at night, pinball, pool tables. Really begins to fill up at 11, and none of the urgency that occurs during the night, and only barely at last call. 139 West 10th, just off Greenwich and Waverly.

**PETER RABBIT:** A bar/disco that spills out onto the street on nice evenings. One of the better spots on the West Side after a walk along the promenade. 305 West 10th, just off Christopher.

**TY'S:** The most popular bar along Christopher Street and understandably so. The easiest bar to "fit into" regardless of your "drag." Western, leather, jock, all fit right in. 114 Christopher near Bedford.

**UNCLE PAUL'S:** This bar changes more often than a liberal politician. I understand that it has just changed again, making a practical review impossible. However, his bulletin board is a true history of the gay movement, since it hasn't changed in four years. 8 Christopher Street near Gay Street.

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**STYX:** Young crowd, mostly interesting. A good disco, especially if you like mirrors. 304 East 38th Street.

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**SAL'S PLACE:** A young crowd frequents this Brooklyn Hts. bar and disco. Fair sound but fine dancing. 75 Pineapple St., right off the promenade.

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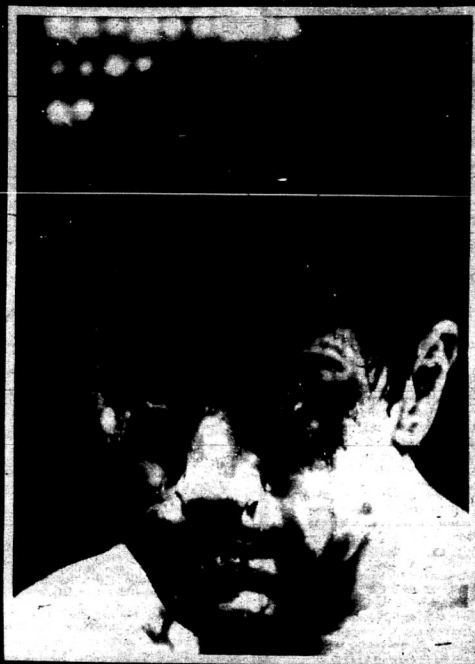
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information call 622-4433.  
**VERNON STEELE** at Ted Hook's Onstage  
265-3800.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

**LIZZ-FILO AND ROO BROWN** (at 8:30)  
and **JAN PARKER** (at 11:30) at Ted  
Hook's Onstage, 265-3800.  
**SHERRY MARSHALL** in Puccini's Re-  
venge at S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**BARBARA ZINN** (at 9) and **LIZ CAL-  
LAWAY** (at 11) at the Duplex, 255-  
5438.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

**FRANK MASTROCOLA** at Ted Hook's  
Onstage, 265-3800.  
**ETHYL EICHELBERGER** again as **CAR-  
LOTTA, THE EMPRESS OF MEXICO**  
at S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**CYNTHIA SINGLETON** (at 9) and **ROB-  
ERT DRAKE** (at 11) at the Duplex,  
255-5438.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

**ROSEMARY CLOONEY** returns to New  
York for a one night only per-  
formance to celebrate the first anni-  
versary of Ted Hook's Onstage. Call 265-  
3800 to place a reservation. Shows at  
both 9:30 and 11:30.  
**ETHYL EICHELBERGER** as **CARLOTTA,  
THE EMPRESS OF MEXICO**, at  
S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**BELLES JESTE** (at 9) and **CHANGING  
LANES** (at 11) at the Duplex, 255-5438.

**JERRY BRAINARD-HARPSCHORDIST**,  
performs Bach's Well-tempered Clavier,  
Book One, at the Carnegie Recital Hall.  
Tickets are \$5.00 at the Carnegie Box  
Office.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

**I LOVE GAY NEW YORK** featuring Fred  
Goldhaber, editor of the Gay Alliance  
Calendar, West Side Discussion Group,  
242-4140.  
**ANTHONY SANTILMO JR.** (at 8:30)  
and **ROBERT RAY AND THE RAY-  
ETTES** at Ted Hook's Onstage, 265-  
3800.  
**GALE GARNETH & COMPANY** (through  
the 20th) and **ETHYL EICHELBER-  
GER** in **MEDEA**, at S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**MARION GALLO** (at 9) and **ROCHELLE  
SELDIN** (at 11) at the Duplex, 255-  
5438.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

**INTERPLAY**: with guest **JOHN SCHUCK**  
from **ANNIE**. Show at 11 only at Ted  
Hook's Onstage, 265-3800.  
**GALE GARNETH & COMPANY**, **ETHYL  
EICHELBERGER** in **MEDEA**, and  
**PETER AND THE GIRLFRIENDS** at  
S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**HERB AND POTATO** at the Duplex till  
the 20th, 255-5438.

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

**PEGGY HEWETT** performs at 11:30 at  
Ted Hook's Onstage, 265-3800.  
**GALE GARNETH & COMPANY**, **MEDEA**,  
and **BETSY & THE BOYS** at S.N.A.F.U.,  
691-3535.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

**THE BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIA**  
**CHORUS** in concert at the Brooklyn  
Botanic Gardens. For information  
call 622-4433.  
**TRANSITION AND PAPERS** at S.N.A.F.U.,  
691-3535.  
**MARGERET WRIGHT** (at 9) and **DEE  
MARTIN** (at 11) at the Duplex, 255-  
5438.

## MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

**A HOLIDAY PARTY FOR LESBIANS** at the  
West Side Discussion Group, 242-  
4140. Women Only!  
**DIANE POIZIO** and **LOU TATTOO** at  
S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**CLAY COURRY** (at 9) and **LIZ CALLA-  
WAY** (at 11) at the Duplex, 255-5438.

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

**PETER GALWAY REVUE** and **ETHYL  
EICHELBERGER** as **CARLOTTA,  
EMPRESS OF MEXICO**, at S.N.A.F.U.,  
691-3535.  
**TINA TYMUS** (at both 9 and 11) at the  
Duplex, 255-5438.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

**A CHRISTMAS SING ALONG** at the  
Duplex, 255-5438.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

**BLOOLIPS** and **ETHYL EICHELBER-  
GER** as **MEDEA** at S.N.A.F.U., 691-  
3535.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26

**BLOOLIPS**, **ETHYL EICHELBERGER** as  
**MEDEA**, and **HOLLY WOODLAWN**,  
at S.N.A.F.U., 691-3535.  
**HERB AND POTATO** at 9 and 11 at the  
Duplex, 255-5438.

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

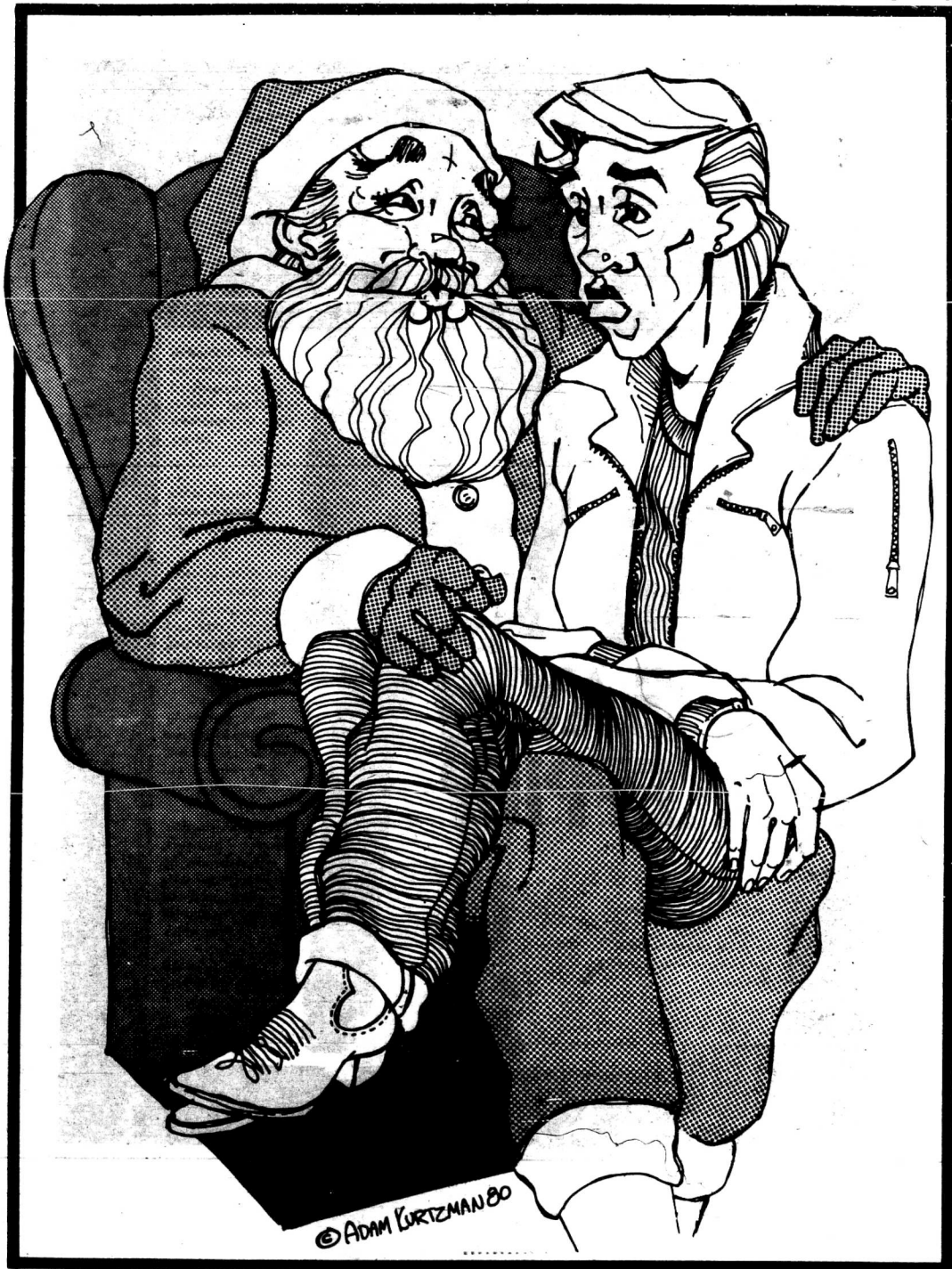
**BLOOLIPS**, **ETHYL EICHELBERGER** as  
**CARLOTTA, EMPRESS OF MEXICO**,  
and **TRUE ROMANCE**, at S.N.A.F.U.,  
691-3535.  
**KAREN MASON** with **BRIAN LASER** at  
both 9 and 11 at the Duplex, 255-  
5438.

**PLEASE HAVE ALL CALENDAR EVENTS  
FOR DECEMBER 28, THROUGH JANU-  
ARY 11, MAILED BY DECEMBER 20, TO:  
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protect his own status at  
the expense of others.

# ARE YOU A GAY PREPPIE

The total look always  
reflects two contradicting  
equals:  
the effect of an ensemble  
and supreme disinterest in  
tidiness.

He inhabits a house of  
mirrors where he sees  
only fragments of  
himself and mistakes  
them for significant  
others.

To remain in the  
group he must  
harden his heart.

The most surprising  
component of the  
preppie's "disciplined  
whimsy" is repressed  
hostility percolating  
just under the surface.

The long-standing  
members of gay and  
preppie elites jealously  
guard entryways to  
their inner circles.

The crucial distinction,  
however, is that gays,  
unlike preppies, do  
not inherit their style  
ready-made, but  
rather create it for  
themselves.

IF YOU'RE GAY OR  
A PREPPIE OR BOTH,  
PLEASE TURN TO  
PAGE 17.

